PALEY'S EVIDENCES EPITOMISED.

PALEY'S

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

EPITOMISED,

WITHOUT OMITTING OR WEAKENING ANY POINT THEREIN.

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THE SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND IMPROVED,

WITH

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

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TO

THE REVEREND

JAMES SCHOLEFIELD, A.M.,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

THIS ATTEMPT

TO EXTEND AND FACILITATE THE KNOWLEDGE

OF THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,

IS

WITH PERMISSION INSCRIBED,

AS

A SMALL TOKEN OF UNFEIGNED RESPECT.

"BE READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU."

1 PETER III. 15.

PREFACE.

As the Gospel is the most invaluable blessing that has ever been bestowed upon man, so it is the duty of every one who is capable of appreciating the arguments which establish its claims to reception, to make himself sufficiently acquainted therewith, that he may fulfil the apostolic injunction, by being careful to "prove all things," and prepared to "hold fast that which is good," with the steadiness which arises from decided conviction consequent upon calm inquiry. Hence it is highly desirable that the Evidences of Christianity should be comprised in as condensed a form as is compatible with perspicuity and precision, in order that they may be more extensively studied, and more easily remembered. It was doubtless under this impression that Dr. Paley's work was written. Under the same impression, the following pages were penned with the design of presenting his argument in as small a compass as possible, without omitting, rendering indistinct, or weakening, any of its component *points*. If this has been accomplished, the present volume may not only be of service to University Students and

Students in Divinity in general, as forming an abridgment on which they may in every case with safety depend; but may also afford to other persons who shrink from the perusal of the original work, an adequate knowledge of those incontestable proofs of the truth of the Christian religion which are therein so ably set forth.

The reader is requested to bear in mind, that in order to abridge, it has often been necessary to reconstruct, Dr. Paley's sentences and paragraphs; and that in consequence of such reconstruction, points may sometimes seem to be omitted, whereas in reality they are retained, though the situation they occupy in the following pages does not exactly correspond with their situation in the original work.

Except in cases where Dr. Paley's sentences have been altered for the sake of brevity, the language used in the following Epitome is very rarely different from that of the original work.

Instead of placing at the head of the first nine chapters, the main proposition which they *collectively* establish, the Compiler has substituted the constituent points or propositions necessary to be made out in order to prove that main proposition; the *first five* chapters, relating to the conduct of the

apostles, being headed by one subsidiary proposition; the sixth chapter, proving the miraculous nature of the story they published, by another; and the three remaining chapters, establishing the identity of the story, by a third proposition. This alteration was made, that the structure and force of the argument might be seen with greater clearness.

At the head of the first chapter devoted to the proof of the second Proposition, Dr. Paley has placed both Propositions, because his second Proposition cannot stand alone. But in the following Epitome, the *construction* of the second Proposition has been altered in such a way as to render it complete in itself, and thereby avoid the necessity for repeating the first, in a part of the work which does not relate to it.

Quotations and details have been omitted in a few places. But though it is conceived that no *point* has been left out or weakened by such omissions; yet, in these cases, the reader has been referred to the pages of Dr. Paley.

A Brief Summary of the Evidences is subjoined, for the purpose of showing at a glance each of the several proofs of the truth of Christianity, and their aggregate weight; and of forming a nucleus of *evidence* capable of being easily remembered.

In the present Edition, the Compiler has added a set of EXAMINATION QUESTIONS, formed upon a peculiar plan. The use of such questions, when inserted in books, is of course to enable the student to ascertain the extent and accuracy of his knowledge. But to do this effectually, they must direct his mind to the several points of the argument, as well individually, as in their mutual relation and collective force; and therefore they should not consist exclusively of Questions of a comprehensive character. An answer, and, to a certain extent, a correct and satisfactory one, may often be returned to a sweeping question, and yet several points, which would have added no little weight, may be omitted, and the party, satisfied with having given what he knows to be a right answer, may be unconscious of any such omission. This arises from taking too general and superficial a view of a subject, from neglecting a due regard to particular points, which are not only important on account of their relative situation, but may also be turned to valuable account, in cases perhaps where there is no place for the argument with which they were originally connected in the mind of the student. To lead him to reap the full benefit, instead of gaining mere vague generalities, nothing seems better calculated than a due intermixture of rather minute yet important interrogatories, with those of a comprehensive

kind. Hence, the Compiler of the following pages, besides giving a series of comprehensive questions, has also framed many of a more minute kind, to refer to ideas comprised in the answers to the others; those distinguished by Greek characters being subsidiary to the ones which are numbered by figures, while such as are left unnumbered generally refer to entire chapters. The answers, for the most part, in the precise form required, will be found immediately on referring to the Epitome, in which figures and letters are inserted, corresponding with those by which the questions are distinguished; a figure or letter being placed at the beginning of each answer, and repeated at the end of it. By this contrivance, it is hoped that the book will combine *all the advantages of a catechism, with those of a regularly connected and sufficiently expanded argument, occupying little more than one-third the compass of the original.* And the student is particularly requested to observe, that the Questions, though especially adapted to the Epitome, were framed with a close attention to the original work, and, where convenience would permit, are couched in Dr. Paley's own phraseology.

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It appears unnecessary to prove, that mankind stood in need of a revelation, since (1) it will not be thought that even under the Christian revelation, we have too much light, or any superfluous degree of assurance (1). And (2) if the Christian religion is not credible, no one with whom we have to do, will support the pretensions of any other (2).

(3) (*a*) Suppose, then, the world had a Creator, who, judging from his works, has all along consulted for the happiness of his creatures; suppose his human creation to be voluntary agents, who have received faculties whereby they are capable of rendering a moral obedience to his will; suppose him to intend for these rational creatures, a second state of existence, in which their situation will depend on their conduct in the first (which is the only supposition that can remove the objection to the divine government in not putting a difference between the good and the bad); suppose the knowledge of what is intended for them to be highly conducive to their happiness; suppose nevertheless almost the whole race to want this knowledge, and not to be likely of themselves to attain it: under these circumstances, is it incredible, or even improbable, that a revelation should be made? Suppose God to design a future state for mankind, is it unlikely that he should acquaint them with it? (*a*).

Now (*β*) as a revelation could not be made without the *intervention* of miracles, it follows that miracles are pro-

bable, or not very improbable, in the same degree as the revelation with which they are connected (β). Since, then, it can be shewn that it is *not incredible* that a future state should be destined by God for mankind, and that being so destined, it should be made known unto them; it is also *not incredible* that miracles should be wrought in attestation of a divine message conveying intelligence of that state, and teaching mankind how to prepare themselves for it. And hence the improbability that such miracles should be wrought, is not of such a nature that it cannot be overcome by any human testimony; and consequently Hume's prejudication, exhibited in his objection, (γ) That no human testimony can in any case render miracles credible (γ), is perfectly unwarrantable [3].

It may however be necessary to examine the principle whereon this objection is founded; namely, That [4] it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false. In the first place, it may be remarked, that there is an ambiguity in the terms "experience," and "contrary to experience;" and that in reality there is a want of experience, in ourselves and the generality of mankind, in relation to miracles, but no contrariety. Strictly speaking, the narrative of a fact capable of being evidenced by the senses, is contrary to experience, when the actual evidence of the senses has contradicted the circumstance related. This is clearly not the contradiction to which Hume alludes. The signification of the term "contrary to experience" must therefore be, that of not having ourselves experienced any thing similar to the kind related, or such things not being generally experienced by others. Now this want of experience in relation to miracles, affords us no ground for disbelieving their reality. The improbability which arises from the want of experience, is exactly equal to (δ) the probability there is, that if miracles were ever wrought to give Christianity a beginning, we should experience similar miracles, or that such miracles would be generally experienced (δ). It is evident, therefore, that if there is no such probability of the frequent repetition of miracles, the

improbability that miracles have been wrought, grounded merely upon the want of that repetition, has likewise no existence. And (ε) that no such probability does exist, must appear from a consideration of the nature as well as the use and purpose of a miracle, which exclude the notion of repetition (ε) (4).

(5) The force of experience as an objection to miracles, is founded in the presumption, either that the course of nature is invariable, or that if it be ever varied, variations will be frequent and general. But probability denies the necessity of this alternative. For, (ζ) supposing the course of nature to be the agency of an intelligent Being, is it not extremely reasonable to expect that on occasions of peculiar importance, he may interrupt that course; and yet, that such occasions should seldom occur, and consequently such interruptions be confined to the experience of a few? (ζ) (5).

(6) It has been said, that in our accounts of miracles, effects are assigned without causes, or effects are attributed to inadequate causes, or to those of the operation of which we have no experience. If it be alleged that we ascribe the cure of the palsy to a touch, or the raising of the dead to a word; our reply is, that we ascribe no such effects to such causes. The touch and the word, in these instances, we regard as mere signs to connect the miracle with its end. The effect we ascribe simply to the volition of the Deity, of whose existence and power, not to say of whose presence and agency, we have previous and independent proof. We have, therefore, all that we seek for in the works of rational agents; namely, a sufficient power and an adequate motive. In a word, once believe that there is a God, and miracles are not incredible (6).

(7) Hume truly states the case of miracles to be a contest of opposite improbabilities, that is to say, a question whether it is more improbable that the miracle should be true, or the testimony false (7). But whilst, by an unwarrantable omission of weighty arguments, he contrives to leave the former improbability undiminished, he endeavours to remove the latter by a sophistical assertion. For, (8) on the one hand, by suppressing all those considerations which

are derived from our knowledge of the existence, attributes, and designs of the Deity, and which shew the antecedent credibility of miracles, he makes it appear that miracles are equally incredible to him who is previously assured of the agency of a God, as to an atheist; and whether related to have been wrought for purposes the most beneficial and important, or for no assignable end whatever, or an end confessedly trifling or pernicious. And, on the other hand, he has provided an answer to every possible accumulation of historical proof that might be adduced to increase the improbability that the testimony should be false, by telling us that we are not obliged to explain how the story or evidence arose; whereas it is clear that the existence of the testimony is a phenomenon, of which the truth of the fact affords a solution; and that if we reject this solution, we ought to have some other to rest in [8].

But of the fallacy of Hume's conclusion, That no human testimony can in any case render miracles credible, one may be otherwise convinced by this short consideration: [9] If twelve men of known probity and good sense, should separately consent and submit to be tortured and put to death, rather than deny that they had seen a miracle, which was incapable of being resolved into fraud or delusion; taking Hume's rule as our guide, we must not believe them. But there is not a sceptic in the world who would not believe them, or who would defend such incredulity [9].

PART I.

OF THE DIRECT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND WHEREIN IT IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EVIDENCE ALLEGED FOR OTHER MIRACLES.

PROPOSITION I.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian Miracles, passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

To establish this proposition, two points are necessary to be made out: *First*, that the associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some accounts which they delivered concerning him: *Secondly*, that what they delivered was a miraculous story, and was in fact the narrative contained in our Scriptures.

CHAPTER I.

The associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some accounts which they delivered concerning him.

IT will, in the first place, be proper to consider the degree of probability which the subject of this point derives from *the nature of the case;* that is by [1] inferences from those parts of the case which are on all hands acknowledged [1].

I. (2) As the Christian religion exists, and therefore, by some means or other, must have been established; so it is morally certain that its establishment could not have been effected without the active exertions of the Founder and his immediate followers; the kind and degree of their activity, and their mode of life, being similar to that of other voluntary missionaries of a new faith, whose habits exhibit an addiction to one serious object, which they endeavour to promote by frequent and earnest preaching, constant religious conversation, and a sequestration from the common pleasures and concerns of life (2). (3) In this state, any enjoyment that may be experienced must spring from sincerity; for with a consciousness of hollowness and falsehood, the fatigue and restraint would become insupportable (3).

II. (4) It is also highly probable that the propagation of Christianity was attended with difficulty and danger.

1. It would be attended with difficulty and danger among the *Jews*. For,

In the first place, the Christian scheme was adverse to the opinions, the hopes, and the pride of the Jewish people. (*a*) They all confidently looked for victories, and triumphs, and the transcendant exaltation of their nation and institution[a]; whereas they found a religion which was to raise those whom they despised to a level with themselves in a spiritual point of view, wherein they most valued their own distinction. And while even the enlightened Jew saw in the ceremonies of his law a great deal of virtue and efficacy; the vulgar had scarcely any thing else; and the hypocritical and ostentatious magnified them above measure; the Christian scheme, without formally repealing them, denied their efficacy and dissolved their obligation. In a word, to the Jewish mind, the doctrines of the new faith were novel, surprising, and mortifying in the highest

a "Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæâ profecti rerum potirentur." Sueton. Vespasian. cap. 4—8.

"*Pluribus* persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso *tempore fore, ut* valesceret oriens, profectique Judæâ rerum potirentur." *Tacit. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9—13.*

degree; and therefore its preachers could not expect to be well received or easily credited (*a*).

Secondly, their situation must have been also perilous on this account, (*β*) because they necessarily reproached the ruling party at Jerusalem with the crucifixion of Christ, which they could not but represent as an unjust and cruel murder (*β*).

Thirdly, Christianity would be suspected and discouraged by the Roman government in Judea. (*γ*) The Christians acknowledged an unqualified obedience to a new master, whom they avowed to be the person foretold to the Jews under the suspected title of king. This was well calculated to arouse the jealousy of a Roman president, who viewing the matter at a great distance, or through the medium of very hostile representations, was unable to understand the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom. Our historians accordingly inform us, that the enemies of Jesus declared to Pontius Pilate that he pretended to a temporal sovereignty. And Justin Martyr complains that it was thought that the Christians were waiting for a human kingdom (*γ*) (4).

2. (5) As Christianity was so exclusive a system, that Paganism must necessarily be overthrown wherever it prevailed, it could not have been promulgated with impunity among the *heathen*.

In the first place, (*δ*) the establishment of Christianity was not like the introduction of a new deity without questioning the reality of other divinities: and from the facility with which the polytheism of ancient nations admitted such an addition, nothing can be argued as to the toleration of a system which swept away all others (*δ*).

Secondly, (*ε*) the case of the first preachers of the Gospel was not the case of philosophers expressing their doubts or disbelief in the popular creed, in their schools or their books. The philosophers did not go from place to place among the common people to make proselytes, and to form, and provide for the permanence of societies professing their tenets: nor did they enjoin their followers to

withdraw from the worship, and refuse a compliance with the rites established by the laws[a] (ε).

Thirdly, (ζ) although some time might elapse before the denouncement of a general persecution by the Roman government, yet we may reasonably conclude that the Christians would in the meantime fear and suffer from the sudden bursts of popular violence, the rashness of some magistrates and the negligence of others, the influence of interested adversaries, and in general from the feelings which would naturally arise in the minds of the heathen, when they heard the few and obscure disciples of a novel and extraordinary faith, representing the religion of the whole Gentile world to be a system of folly and delusion (ζ).

Fourthly, it is not probable that the teachers of Christianity would find protection in the general disbelief of the popular theology, prevalent among the intellectual heathens. (η) Men may disbelieve the established religion, and yet be indisposed to endanger the present state of things by suffering it to be disturbed by another of which they believe as little. Whenever was there a change of religion patronized by infidels? How little the principles of toleration were understood by the wisest of the ancient sceptics, may be gathered from two eminent examples. Pliny the younger pronounces this monstrous judgment: "Those who persisted in declaring themselves Christians, I ordered to be led away to punishment (*i. e.* execution), for I did not doubt, whatever it was that they confessed, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished." And after the strictest examination had only served to prove to the emperor Trajan the unimpeachable morality and good conduct of the disciples of Christianity, that mild and accomplished prince went no farther in his sentiments of moderation and equity, than what appears in the following rescript: "The Christians are not to be sought for, but if any are brought before you and convicted, they are to be

[a] The best of the ancient philosophers, Plato, Cicero, and Epictetus, allowed, or rather enjoined, men to worship the gods of the country, and in the established form. Except Socrates, they all thought it wiser to comply with the *laws than to contend.*

punished." The truth is, among the ancient heathens, religion was not merely allied to the state, but it was incorporated therewith: and as the offices of the priesthood were often held by statesmen and warriors, they resented every affront upon their religion, as a direct opposition to government. Moreover the established worship was of great antiquity; its festival shows and solemnities benefited many, and delighted the common people; and it was interwoven with every circumstance of public or private life (η).

We may readily accept the account of the matter given by Gibbon: (θ) "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosophers as equally false; and by the magistrates as equally useful." And from this statement we may argue, that the Christian missionaries could look for no protection or impunity from these three classes of men. For, none could be expected from the people, whose religion it would entirely subvert; none from the philosophers, who, considering all religions as equally false, would regard them as busy and troublesome zealots; none from the magistrate, who was satisfied with the utility of the subsisting religion, and would be hostile to a system which directly tended to produce a total rupture of public opinion (θ) (5).

III. (6) As the observable part of the conduct of every teacher of a new religion, must agree in a great measure with the duties taught by him, in order that he may obtain either hearers or proselytes; the nature of the case affords a strong proof that the original teachers of Christianity, in consequence of their new profession, entered upon a new and singular course of life. They must have spent much of their time in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in corresponding with other societies. Moreover their lives must have been to a great extent conformable to the pure, benevolent, disinterested conduct which the precepts of Christianity enjoin (6). And this is very important: for "it is the most difficult of all things to convert men from vicious habits to virtuous one

as every one may judge from what he feels in himself, as well as from what he sees in others[a]."

(7) Without, then, possessing any more information than a knowledge of the existence of the religion, of the general story whereon it is founded, and that no act of force or authority was concerned in its first success; we may conclude, from the very nature and exigency of the case, that the author of the religion and his immediate disciples, in publishing Christianity, underwent the labors and troubles which the propagators of new sects are known to undergo; that they could hardly fail to encounter strong opposition, and must have often experienced injurious and cruel treatment, or at any rate have been in a state of constant peril and anxiety; and that their lives, visibly at least, corresponded with their teaching, and consequently were of a new character, requiring continual self-denial (7).

CHAPTER II.

The associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some accounts which they delivered concerning him.

HAVING thus considered what was *likely* to happen, we are next to inquire how the transaction is represented in the accounts that have come down to us. The evidence incidentally afforded us by *heathen writers,* (1) being drawn from a source which is unsuspected (1), first offers itself to our notice.

(2) TACITUS[b] has a passage, written about seventy years after the Crucifixion, and relating to the fire of Rome, wherein he relates that Nero, in order to suppress the rumours that he himself was the author of the mischief,

[a] Hartley's Essays on Man.

[b] Where profane writers are cited by Dr. Paley, I did not think it necessary *in this epitome to transcribe the references* to their pages.—J. W. S.

imputed it to the Christians, and subjected them to extreme sufferings. This passage proves three things: first, that Christ, the Founder of the religion, was put to death in the reign of Tiberius, under the procurator Pontius Pilate; secondly, that the religion spread in the country in which he was put to death; and thirdly, that it extended so rapidly, that within thirty-four years from the death of its Founder, a very great multitude of Christians were found as Rome. From this it may be fairly inferred that the original teachers thereof could not have been idle: and that its propagation, directly after the execution of its author, and in the country in which he suffered, must have been attended with danger (2).

SUETONIUS mentions the punishment of the Christians in terms which seem to refer to some more general persecution. And JUVENAL alludes to their dreadful punishment under Nero[a].

(3) If then the Founder of the religion was put to death; if within thirty-one years afterwards, many of the Christian converts suffered the greatest extremities for their profession; it is hardly credible that the Founder's *companions, the first teachers* of the institution, should go about their undertaking with ease and safety (3).

(4) From a letter of PLINY the younger, addressed to Trajan, about seventy years after the Crucifixion, on the subject of punishing the Christians, it appears, in the first place, that there was a very great number of them throughout all Pontus and Bithynia; and secondly, that accusations, trials, and examinations, were daily going on against them, and that those who refused to renounce their profession were put to death, without the denouncement of any public persecution by sovereign authority. And the fact that, without any such denouncement, it was the custom of the people of Asia to proceed against them with tumult and uproar, is further confirmed by a rescript of

[a] Pone Tigellinum, tædâ lucebis in illâ,
Qua stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant,
Et latum mediâ sulcum deducit* arenâ.

* Forsan "deducis."

ADRIAN to his proconsul Minucius Fundanus, wherein he enjoins that for the future, if they were guilty, they should be legally brought to trial, and not be pursued by importunity and clamour (4).

(5) MARTIAL, a few years before Pliny, made their sufferings the subject of his ridicule[a]; which shews the notoriety of the fact. From his testimony as well as Pliny's, (a) we also learn that the Christians could have averted their fate, by consenting to join in heathen sacrifices (a).

EPICTETUS imputes their constancy to madness or habit, and MARCUS AURELIUS to obstinacy; which is a testimony to their sufferings (5).

CHAPTER III.

The associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity, voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some accounts which they delivered concerning him.

FROM heathen writers a distant and only general view of the primitive condition of Christianity can be obtained or expected. The *detail and interior of the transaction* must of course be sought for in the books of *Christian authors.* Now in the four histories of Jesus Christ; in the history taking up from his death, the narrative of the propagation of his religion for a space of nearly thirty years; and in the collection of letters written by certain principal agents in the business; the point contended for, namely, the sufferings of the witnesses of the history, is attested in every variety of form.

[a] In matutinâ nuper spectatus arenâ
Mucius, imposuit qui sua membra focis.
Si patiens fortisque tibi durusque videtur,
Abderitanæ pectora plebis habes;
Nam cum dicatur, tunicâ præsente molestâ
Ure* manum: plus est dicere, Non facio.

* Forsan "thure."

(1) In every species of testimony, it is of the greatest importance to attend to the *casual and undesigned disclosure of information or grounds of argument*, as this is a kind of proof least likely to be the contrivance of fraud or misrepresentation (1). Some conclusions of this sort, as preparatory to more direct testimony, may therefore be suggested:

I. (2) Our books relate that the Founder of Christianity, in consequence of his undertaking, was put to death as a malefactor at Jerusalem. *Notwithstanding this*, however, they proceed to tell us that his religion was immediately afterwards preached in that city, and thence propagated throughout Judea, and in other parts of the Roman empire: all which is confirmed by Tacitus. Now could the disciples of Christ, in publishing his religion, hope to escape the dangers in which he perished (2)?

II. (3) All the Evangelists agree in representing Christ as foretelling the persecution of his followers[a]. Hence we may argue, either that he did so predict, and the event corresponded with the prediction; or that the historians put the prediction into his mouth, because, at the time of writing the histories, such was the existing state of things: for the only two remaining suppositions appear in the highest degree incredible; which are, that Christ filled his followers with fears and apprehensions without any reason for what he said, and contrary to the truth of the case; or, that although no such thing had happened or been foretold by him, yet historians who lived in the age to which the alleged prediction related, falsely and officiously ascribed it to him (3).

III. (4) The New Testament abounds with exhortations to patience, and with consolations under distress[b]. These must have been deemed not only unintelligible, but false, by those to whom they were addressed, if there was nothing in the circumstances of the times which required patience, constancy, and resolution. And as they were

[a] See Matt. xxiv. 9. Mark iv. 17. Luke xxi. 12—16 John xvi. 4.

[b] See Rom. viii. 35, 37. 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17. James v. 10, 11. Heb. x. 32—36. 2 Thess. i. 4, 5. Rom. v. 3, 4. 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13, 19.

written by several different writers, and certainly did appear in the age to which they lay claim, it cannot for a moment be supposed that they were put in merely to induce a belief in after-ages that the first Christians were exposed to dangers to which they were not exposed, or suffered what they really did not undergo (4).

CHAPTER IV.

The associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some accounts which they delivered concerning him.

I. (1) THE treatment of the Christian Religion, and the exertions of its first preachers, are not described in a professed account of persecutions, but *dispersedly in a mixed general history;* a circumstance which of itself negatives any supposition of a fraudulent design (1). (2) This history relates that the Founder of the religion, having for a certain period wholly employed himself in publishing the institution in Judea and Galilee, was apprehended and put to death; and that those persons by whom he had been constantly attended, and whom he had commanded to preach the new faith throughout the world, together with other disciples, assembled a few days after the conclusion of his ministry, and began to preach the religion at Jerusalem; publicly asserting that he whom the rulers and inhabitants of that place had so lately crucified, was the person in whom all their prophecies and long expectations terminated; that he was appointed by God to be the future judge of mankind; and that all who were anxious for happiness after death, ought to receive him as such, and to testify their belief by being baptized in his name[a]. It also states that many accepted this proposal, and formed *amongst themselves* a strict union and society; that the

[a] *Acts ii. 14; xi.* [b] Ib. iv. 32.

Jewish government threw two of the teachers into prison, and threatened them with further punishment; that these declared to their judges that they thought themselves bound to preach the religion[a]; that after they were released, they accordingly did so, and, with ten of their companions, were thereupon imprisoned and beaten[b]; and yet that they afterwards persisted in daily publishing the prohibited doctrines at Jerusalem, as well in the temple as from house to house[c].

(α) Hitherto the preachers of the new religion seem to have had the common people on their side (α); which may have prevented the Jewish rulers from proceeding to greater extremities. But this was only for a short time. (β) The enemies of Christianity, by representing it to the people as tending to subvert their law, degrade their lawgiver, and dishonour their temple, soon induced them to join in stoning one of the most active of the disciples[d] (β). A general persecution followed; and most of the converts, except the twelve apostles, being driven out of Jerusalem by its violence, preached the religion wherever they came[e].

An event of great importance now took place. (γ) A young man, distinguished for his bitter hostility to Christianity, was suddenly converted, as he was on his way to seize the Jewish converts at Damascus[f]. This change brought upon him a double measure of enmity from his former party; from whose diligent attempts at his destruction he escaped with the utmost difficulty (γ).

(δ) About seven or eight, or perhaps only three or four years after the death of Christ, there was a cessation of persecution; probably arising from some circumstance in the civil history of the Jews, or some danger which engrossed the public attention[g] (δ). During this interval of quietness, (ε) the Christian preachers did not relax their activity; they formed societies in all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and some of them travelled as far as Phœnice, Cy-

[a] Acts iv. [b] Ib. v. 18. [c] Ib. 42. [d] Ib. vi. 12. [e] Ib. viii. 1. [f] Ib. 3.
[g] Ib. ix. 31. (δ) Dr. Lardner ascribes this cessation of persecution to the consternation excited in the minds of the Jews by Caligula's attempt to set up his statue in the temple of Jerusalem (δ).

prus, and Antioch[a], returning to Jerusalem as the centre of their mission (ε). (ζ) This tranquillity was however soon disturbed by Herod Agrippa, who, to gratify the Jews, beheaded one apostle, and seizing another, would have put him to death, had he not been, according to the account, miraculously delivered from prison[b] (ζ) (2).

(3) These things are related with the utmost particularity of places, persons, and circumstances, and without any discoverable propensity in the historian to magnify the fortitude or the sufferings of his party. He mentions when persecution raged, and when it ceased; when popular favour was experienced, and when mild treatment or forbearance was shown (3).

Our history now leaves the original associates of Christ, and proceeds with the memoirs of (4) ST. PAUL, who having left Antioch, went forth, in conjunction with another, to spread the gospel in Asia Minor. In almost every city, their persons were insulted and their lives endangered. Thus, they were expelled from Antioch in Pisidia, and attempted to be stoned at Iconium[d]; while at Lystra, one of them was actually stoned, and drawn out of the city for dead[e].—Notwithstanding this treatment, the apostle fearlessly undertook a second expedition. Leaving Jerusalem, in company with the writer of the history, he crossed over the Ægean Sea into Greece[f], where he experienced a variety of persecutions. At Philippi, he and one of his companions were cruelly whipped, and immediately afterwards thrust into the inner dungeon of a prison, and there placed in the stocks[g]. Not deterred by this, as soon as they were released, they passed on to Thessalonica, where some of the populace assailed the house in which they lodged; and not finding them at home, they dragged the master of the house before the magistrate for receiving them[h]. From Berea, the apostle was obliged to depart on account of the turbulence of the Jews[i]. And at Corinth, they stirred up an insurrection against him, and brought him before the Roman president[k], to whose con-

[a] *Acts xi. 19.* [b] Ib. xii. 1. [c] Ib. xiii. 50. [d] Ib. xiv. 5. [e] Ib. 19.
[f] *Ib. xvi. 11.* [g] *Ib. 23. 24, 33.* [h] Ib. xvii. 1—9. [i] Ib. 13. [k] Ib. viii. 12.

tempt for the Jews and their controversies, of which he accounted Christianity to be one, the apostle alone owed his deliverance[a].—After leaving Corinth, this indefatigable teacher returned to Jerusalem; but instead of remaining there long he again traversed the northern provinces of Asia Minor[b], ending his progress at Ephesus. He continued in the daily exercise of his ministry in that place for two years, until his success excited the apprehensions of those who were interested in the support of the national worship, and their clamour produced a tumult in which he had nearly lost his life[c]. Undismayed however by the danger to which he saw himself exposed, he was driven from Ephesus only to renew his labours at Corinth[d]. Leaving this city in order that he might be present at the Feast of Pentecost, he was compelled by a conspiracy of the Jews to pursue a circuitous route through Macedonia.—He had been in Jerusalem only a few days, when the populace forcing him out of the temple, would have killed him had he not been rescued by the Roman guard[e]. The officer who thus interposed, acted from his care of the public peace, and not from any favour to the apostle; for St. Paul was no sooner secured, than the officer was about to examine him by torture[f].—From this time to the conclusion of the history, the apostle remained in the public custody of the Roman government. Having narrowly escaped assassination, by discovering the plot, and having appealed to the Emperor; when he had suffered two years' imprisonment, he was sent to Rome; and in going thither, he encountered the perils of a desperate shipwreck[g]. But although a prisoner, and his fate still depending, neither his various and long-continued sufferings, nor the danger of his situation, deterred him from preaching the Gospel to all that came unto him[h] (4).

II. (5) The foregoing narrative relating to St. Paul, is corroborated by the strongest testimony a history can receive; namely, that of *letters written by St. Paul himself*, and unintentionally confirming the history in many par-

[a] Acts xviii. 14—16. [b] Ib. 23. [c] Ib. xix. 1, 9, 10. [d] Ib. xx. 1, 2.
[e] *Ib. xxi. 27—33.* [f] Ib. xxii. 23, 24. [g] Ib. xxvii. [h] Ib. xxviii. 31.

ticulars. Thus if the historian gives an account of the persecution or the dangers to which the apostle was exposed at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Ephesus; agreeable thereto are the general terms used by St. Paul himself when referring to his reception in those cities[a]. If the history informs us that the apostle was expelled from Antioch, attempted to be stoned at Iconium, and actually stoned at Lystra; St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, (whom, according to the history, he first met with in these parts,) appeals to that disciple's knowledge "of the persecutions which befell him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra[b]." If the history represents him as reminding the Ephesian elders, as one proof of the disinterestedness of his views, that he had supplied his own necessities and those of his companions by personal labor; he himself writes from Ephesus that he then "labored, working with his own hands[c]." These and many similar coincidences, all of which are drawn from independent sources, not only confirm particular points, but add to the credit of the whole narrative, as well as support the author's profession of being a contemporary, and frequently a companion, of the person whose history he writes (5).

III. (6) What the letters of the apostles declare of the suffering state of Christianity, *the writings of their companions and immediate followers* expressly confirm:

CLEMENT, who is spoken of by St. Paul[d], mentions the sufferings and martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the persecutions undergone by a very great number of others of both sexes.—HERMAS, saluted by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, refers to the martyrdom of the Christians.—POLYCARP, the disciple of St. John, mentions the sufferings of Ignatius, Lorimus, and Rufus, and of St. Paul and the rest of the Apostles.—IGNATIUS, the contemporary of Polycarp, declares the contempt for death shewn by St. Peter and other persons who are said to have seen Christ after his resurrection (6).

(7) What a persecution was in those days, appears

[a] 1 Thess. i. 6; ii. 2. 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10.
[b] 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.
[c] *1 Cor. iv. 11, 12.*
[d] Phil. iv. 3.

from a circular letter written by the Church of Smyrna soon after the martyrdom of Polycarp their bishop, which mentions the wonderful patience and love of Christ exhibited by those, who, refusing to the last to deny him, were so flayed that their very inward veins and arteries were laid open; or being condemned to the beasts, were in the meantime forced to lie upon sharp spikes and undergo divers other torments, to bring them, if possible, to renounce their religion (7).

CHAPTER V.

The associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntary passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some accounts which they delivered concerning him.

ON the history, of which an abstract has been just given, there are *a few observations* which it may be proper to make, by way of applying its testimony to the proposition above stated:

I. The information afforded by our Scripture history concerning one particular apostle, extends so far to the rest, as it shows the nature of the service. (1) When we see one apostle suffering persecution in the discharge of his commission, we cannot reasonably believe, without evidence, that the same office could at the same time be attended with ease and safety to others. And this inference is confirmed by the letters before referred to; for the writer speaks of the rest of the Apostles as enduring the like sufferings with himself[a]. And it is also confirmed by the fact, that in the short account given of the other apostles in the former part of the history, we read of their imprisonments and punishments, the stoning of one of their adherents, the violent persecution of the disciples, the beheading of one of the twelve, and the sentence of an-

[a] 1 Cor. iv. 9, et seq.

other to the same fate: and all this in Jerusalem alone, and within ten years after the death of Christ[a] (1).

II. (2) No credit need be taken in the first instance for the miraculous part of the narrative, nor need the correctness of single passages be maintained. If the whole is not a novel, a romance; if the apostles are not imaginary persons; if their letters are not all forgeries, even of names and characters that never existed; then there is sufficient evidence that the original followers of Jesus Christ used strenuous exertions to propagate his religion, and underwent great dangers and sufferings in consequence thereof (2).

III. (3) The general reality of the apostolic history is confirmed by the consideration, that, on the one hand, in setting forth the exertions of Christ and his immediate followers, it does no more than assign *adequate causes* for effects confessedly produced, that is, for the acknowledged existence and progress of Christianity at that time; and that, on the other hand, in relating the opposition, dangers, and sufferings encountered by the original preachers, it does no more than describe *consequences naturally resulting* from the situations in which they were confessedly placed, as the emissaries of a religion, the propagation of which must have been attended with great difficulty and danger, whether carried on amongst the Jews or amongst the heathen nations (3).

IV. The records before us supply evidence that the primitive Christians assumed on conversion a new and peculiar course of private life. (4) We read of their continuing daily in prayer and devotion[b]. We know also how perfect is the purity, and how extensive the benevolenee enjoined in the gospel, and we find the apostolic epistles describing and perpetually referring to the great and distinctive change in the moral condition of the converts[c] (4). (5) Moreover we find Pliny testifying that the Christians "were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as a god; and to bind themselves by an oath, not

[a] Acts iv. 3, 21; v. 18, 40. [b] Ib. i. 14, ii. 46; xii. 12.
[c] *Eph. ii. 1—3; Tit. iii. 3;* 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Rom. vi. 21.

to the commission of any wickedness, but that they would not be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; that they would never falsify their word, or deny a pledge[a] committed to them, when called upon to return it." This proves that among the Christians of his time, there was a morality more strict and pure than was ordinary in that age. And this testimony, though relating to a period about fifty years after St. Paul's time, may be fairly applied to the apostolic age; for it is not probable that the hearers and immediate disciples of Christ were more relaxed than their successors in the time of Pliny (5).

CHAPTER VI.

The associates and immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, some miraculous *accounts which they delivered concerning him.*

(1) WHEN we consider,—*first*, the prevalency of Christianity at this hour; *secondly*, the only credible account that can be given of its origin, namely, the activity of the Founder and his associates; *thirdly*, the opposition which that activity must have excited; *fourthly*, the fate of the Founder, attested as well by heathen as by Christian writers; *fifthly*, the testimony of the same writers to the sufferings of Christians contemporary with or immediately succeeding the first teachers of the religion; *sixthly*, the ascription of predictions of such sufferings to the Founder, which of itself proves either that they were delivered and fulfilled, or that the existence of persecution induced the writers of his life to attribute them to him; *seventhly*, the letters by some principal agents in the transactions, referring to extreme labors, dangers, and sufferings, sustained by them-

[a] This ought to have been translated "a deposit entrusted to their safe keeping," the original word being *depositum*, not pignus. See Heinneccii Antiquitates Juris Civilis, tom. I. lib. iii. tit. xv. 31.—J. W. B.

selves and their companions; *and lastly*, that there is a history which purports to be written by a fellow-traveller of the person to whom it principally relates, and by its incidental correspondence with the letters of that person, proves itself to have been written by some one well acquainted with the subject, and which contains accounts of travels, persecutions, and martyrdoms, answering to what the former reasons lead us to expect;—we can hardly doubt but that at the time to which they relate, there appeared a number of persons who, for the sake of propagating the belief of an extraordinary story, voluntarily incurred great dangers, exerted great industry, and sustained extreme persecution (1). It is also proved that the same persons, in consequence of their belief of this story, entered upon a new and singular course of life.

From the clear and acknowledged parts of the case, it is likewise in the highest degree probable that the story these persons related was a *miraculous* story; that is, that they asserted that there had been supernatural proofs of the mission of Jesus Christ. (2) (*a*) The first preachers of the gospel declared, that the object in whom a long series of ancient prophecies terminated, from the completion of which all the Jewish nation had formed the most magnificent expectations of temporal deliverance and prosperity, had appeared in the person of a young Galilean of mean condition, who could pretend to no achievements of valour or strength or policy, no discoveries in any art or science, no efforts of genius or learning; and who, for calling himself the Son of God, and in that character publicly teaching religion, was put to an ignominious death. Now it is very evident that they must have relied upon miraculous pretentions in support of this declaration. They might indeed argue in favour of Jesus upon the predictions of the Old Testament; and the argument might proceed without recurring at every turn to his miraculous works. But, in every one of the various controversies and questions which would naturally arise respecting him and his institution, miracles, real or pretended, must have been *presupposed*. *Otherwise, there* could have been no place for any discus-

sion or consideration; there could have been no possible ground for believing such an individual to be the promised Messiah, or at least, for receiving Jesus of Nazareth, rather than any other person, in so exalted a character (*a*).

The claim to miraculous powers made by the Christians of succeeding ages, may also be fairly admitted as a proof of the miraculous nature of the original story. (*β*) Imitation so often follows reality, that it is easy to believe that if miracles were performed at first, miracles would be pretended afterwards: whereas if they were not performed by the original teachers of Christianity, it is very improbable that they would be pretended to in after-times (*β*))2).

CHAPTER VII.

The history recorded in our Scriptures is the miraculous story for which many of the immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct.

IT being proved, that the first propagators Christianity did voluntarily pass their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and also enter upon a new and singular course of life, in consequence of their belief in, and for the sake of, some miraculous story; the next great question is, (1) *Whether the account our Scriptures contain is that story:* or, in other words, Whether the story Christians have *now*, is the story Christians had *then* (1). That *in the main*, ours is the original story, will appear from the following *general considerations*:

I. (2) There exists no trace or vestige of any other story. So far as the matter is noticed by heathen writers, they confirm the Scriptural account. (*a*) They mention Jesus as the Founder of Christianity; his crucifixion at Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate; the rapid propagation of his religion; the persecution of its disciples; their periodical assemblies for the worship of Christ as a God; their binding themselves by an oath not to be guilty of injustice;

their strong mutual sympathy; their despising wordly possessions, and having all things in common; their belief in a future state, and contempt for death (*a*).

The same may be observed of the very few Jewish writers of the apostolic age or the period adjoining, whose works have come down to us. (*β*) Whatever they omit, no history is advanced by them other than that which we acknowledge (*β*) (2). (3) Josephus, who wrote his Antiquities or History of the Jews about sixty years after the commencement of Christianity, in a passage generally admitted as genuine, makes mention of John under the name of John the Baptist, and relates that he was a preacher of virtue, that he baptised his proselytes, that he was well received by the people, that he was imprisoned and put to death by Herod, and that Herod lived in a criminal cohabitation with Herodias, his brother's wife. In another passage, allowed by many, we read of the execution of James the brother of Jesus. In a third passage, which has been long disputed, but yet is extant in every copy of Josephus's History, we have an explicit testimony to the substance of the Scripture account, in these words:—"At that time lived Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man, for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over many Jews and Gentiles. This was the Christ: and when Pilate, at the instigation of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the cross, they who before had conceived an affection for him, did not cease to adhere to him; for on the third day he appeared to them alive again; the divine prophets having foretold these and many wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of the Christians, so called from him, subsists to this time" (3).

(4) Now it may be reasonably contended, either that this passage is genuine, or that the silence of Josephus was *designed*. For though we lay aside our own books, yet when Tacitus, who wrote not twenty, perhaps not ten years after Josephus, in his accounts of a period in which Josephus was nearly thirty years of age, tells us of the con*demnation of a* vast multitude of men at Rome, who

belonged to a sect which originated in Judea, and were denominated Christians from Christ, who was ignominiously executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate;—when Suetonius, the contemporary of Tacitus, relates that in the time of Claudius, the Jews made disturbances at Rome, Christus being their leader, and that in the reign of Nero the Christians were punished; under both which emperors Josephus lived;—when Pliny, in his epistle written not more than thirty years after Josephus's History, complains of the prevalence of Christianity throughout Bithynia, and the general desertion of the public rites consequent thereupon; and when we have no reason to believe that the Christians were less numerous elsewhere;—it cannot be supposed that the religion and its origin were too obscure to be noticed by Josephus. (γ) Perhaps he may have been silent, because he did not know how to represent the business; for it was undoubtedly for this reason that Eusebius, in his life of Constantine, omitted the most remarkable circumstance, the death of the emperor's son Crispus (γ) (4). Be the cause, however, of the omission in Josephus what it may, (supposing the passage concerning Christ to be unauthentic,) still by the other passages he in part confirms the scriptural history, and no where does he contradict it, or give any other account of the matter.

II. We have from our own time up to the days of the apostles, an unbroken train of Christian writers who proceed upon the scriptural account, and upon no other. The main facts, the principal agents, are alike in all. They are incidentally disclosed in the APOSTOLIC EPISTLES, though written without the remotest design of giving a history of Christianity. They are mentioned, or referred to, in an epistle bearing the name of BARNABAS, the companion of St. Paul, which is probably genuine, and was certainly written in the apostolic age; in one of CLEMENT, a hearer of St. Paul, though it was written for a purpose only remotely connected with the Christian history; in a brief hortatory epistle of POLYCARP, a disciple of St. John; in the works of IGNATIUS, the contempory of Polycarp, though treating of subjects in nowise leading to any recital of the

Christian history; by QUADRATUS, who lived in the same age as Ignatius, and who relates that some of those whom Christ had healed, and others whom he had raised from the dead, were then living; and by JUSTIN MARTYR, who came little more than thirty years after Quadratus. It is unnecessary to mention others, because the history, after this time, occurs in ancient Christian authors as familiarly as in modern sermons; and it is always the same in substance as in the evangelical writings. And this is in a great measure true of *all* the ancient Christian writings. (5) Whatever fables are intermixed, they preserve the material parts as we have them, and therefore are evidence that these points were acknowledged by all the Christians of those times (5).

Now (6) that the original story should have died away so entirely that there should be no memorial of its existence, though so many records of the time and transaction remain, and that another should have been universally received by the Christians in its stead, is beyond any example of the corruption of even oral tradition, and is still less consistent with the experience of history (6).

III. (7) We find the early Christians of many different and widely separated nations concurring in the practice of baptism, of assembling on a stated day of the week, and of receiving the eucharist. This accordance with the commands and institutions recorded in our Scriptures, shews that the narrative we now possess was the one they acted upon, and had received from their teachers. There is no room for insinuating that this narrative was studiously framed to account for the origin of previously established observances; for the Scripture accounts are too short and cursory, not to say too obscure, and, in this view, deficient, to warrant any such suspicion (7).

IV. That the accounts in our Gospels, as to their principal parts at least, are those delivered by the first teachers of the religion, is evident from the fact, that it appears by the Gospels themselves, that the Christian community were acquainted with the substance of the narrative *before they were* written. (8) (δ) The Gospels were not

the original cause of the Christian history being believed, but were themselves among the consequences of that belief. This is expressly affirmed by St. Luke in his preface, in which he testifies that the substance of the history he was about to write, was already believed by Christians upon the declaration of eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; and that his object in writing was to trace each particular to its origin, and to declare the certainty of those things wherein the person to whom he wrote had been previously instructed (δ). In St. John's Gospel, some of the principal facts, doubtless upon the presumption of their general notoriety, are merely referred to, instead of being related. Thus St. John does not relate Christ's ascension, though he plainly refers to it[a]. St. Matthew makes the like omission; and neither he nor St. John dispose of our Lord's person in any manner whatever. St. John's manner of introducing his narrative[b]—"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying,"—evidently presupposes that his readers knew who John was. His rapid parenthetical reference to John's imprisonment—"for John was not yet cast into prison[c]"—could only come from one in the habit of considering John's imprisonment as perfectly notorious. By describing Andrew as "Simon Peter's brother[d]," although Simon Peter had not been mentioned before, he supposes that Peter was well known[e]. His noticing the prevailing misconstruction of a discourse which Christ held with the beloved disciple, proves that the characters and the discourse were already public (8). And the observation grounded on these instances, is of equal validity for the purpose of the present argument, whoever were the authors of the histories.

These *four* circumstances—(9) *first*, the total absence of any account of the origin of the religion substantially different from ours; *secondly*, the recognition of our account in its principal parts by a series of writers from the apostolic age to the present; *thirdly*, the early and extensive prevalence of rites and usages which evidently result from

[a] John iii. 13; vi. 62; xx. 17. [b] Ib. i. 15.
[c] *Ib. iii. 24.* [d] Ib. i. 40. [e] Ib. xxi. 24.

injunctions recorded in our account; *fourthly*, such account bearing in its construction, proof that it is a narrative of facts known and believed at the time it was written [9],—are surely sufficient to prove that the story we have now, is, in its texture and principal facts, the story which Christians had at the beginning. That the Resurrection of Christ, in particular, was always a part of the Christian story, no one can doubt, who reflects that it is asserted, referred to, or assumed, in every Christian writing which has come down to us.

Now even if our evidence stopped here, [10] we should have a case to offer which is without a parallel; for we should be able to allege that in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, a number of persons voluntarily encountered great danger, undertook great labors, and sustained great sufferings, all in order to establish a new religion founded upon a miraculous story which they published wherever they went; and that the resurrection of a person, whom during his life they had followed and accompanied, was a constant part of this story [10].

CHAPTER VIII.

The history recorded in our Scriptures is the miraculous story for which many of the immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct.

THAT the story we now have, is, in the main, that which the apostles published, is nearly certain from the considerations before mentioned. But [1] whether the historical books of the New Testament, *as to their details*, are to be considered as deserving of credit, either as histories, so that a fact ought to be accounted true, because it is found in them; or as representing the accounts which, true or false, the apostles published; is a point which necessarily depends *upon our knowledge* of the books and their authors [1].

In treating of this, *three principal observations* may be made:

I. (2) The situation of the authors to whom the Gospels are ascribed, was such, that if any one of the four is *genuine*, it is sufficient for our purpose (2).

(3) St. Mark was an inhabitant of Jerusalem, to whose house the apostles were wont to resort, and was an attendant of one of the most eminent of them. St. Luke was a companion and fellow traveller of the most active teacher of the religion, and was frequently in the society of the original apostles; and St. Matthew and St. John were two of the original apostles themselves (3). Nothing can be more satisfactory than information given by such parties as these. (*a*) If the several Gospels are genuine, such was the situation of the authors of them, that we possess the very species of information which our imagination would have carved out for us had it been wanting (*a*). But if *any one* of them is genuine, it is sufficient. (4) Allowing either the first or the fourth only to be genuine, we have the narrative of one of the twelve original emissaries of the religion. And even supposing none to be genuine except the second or third, we have an account furnished by an individual associated with the apostles in their ministry, and consequently well acquainted with the statements they advanced.

Though at present the testimony of the Evangelists, strictly speaking, is only used to prove that what the Gospels contain is what the apostles preached, it may here be remarked, that allowing the Scripture narratives to be genuine, the situation of their authors also gives us the greatest reason for believing the truth of the facts they record. (*β*) Even the writers of the second and third Gospels had means of acquiring authentic information which very few historians possess. But the other evangelists actually saw and heard many of the transactions and discourses which occur in their writings; and their recollection of them must have been continually kept up by their being deeply engaged in the subject, and having frequent *occasion to repeat* to others what they had witnessed;

and hence the detailed accounts of miracles, wherein the time, place, and persons are specified, which are contained in their Gospels, if they really proceeded from these men, must either be true in substance, or they must be wilful and meditated falsehoods. Yet if the latter is the case, these writers and their companions sacrificed their ease and safety for a purpose most inconsistent with dishonest intentions—they were villains, for no end but to teach honesty, and martyrs, without the least prospect of honor or advantage (β) (4).

We have seen that the New Testament contains four distinct histories, the genuineness of any one of which is perfectly sufficient. If therefore we must be considered as encountering the risk of error in assigning the authors of the Gospels, (5) we are entitled to the advantage of so many separate probabilities (5). And (6) although it would subtract from their character as testimonies strictly independent, if it were to appear that the evangelists used each other's works[a]; yet it would little diminish the separate authority of any one of the Gospels that is genuine, or their mutual confirmation. For even allowing that the first and third Gospels were not written by St. Matthew and St. Luke, and yet that St. Mark compiled his history almost entirely from them; still, if a person so immediately connected with the apostles, made the compilation, it follows, that in the time of the apostles, those Gospels were not only in existence, but were also in great credit and esteem (6).

II. It is observable that the New Testament contains a collection of proofs; that this is composed of writings such as the natural order and progress of things in the infancy of Christianity might be expected to produce; and that the manner in which these writings have been received,

[a] Parallelisms have been traced between St. Matthew's Gospel and that of St. Luke. These may be explained (7) by supposing either that St. Luke, who does not profess to be an eye-witness, had consulted St. Matthew's history; or that some brief accounts had been previously committed to writing, and were occasionally admitted by both authors into their narratives.

St. John's Gospel is universally allowed to be a strictly independent *testimony (7).*

is exactly correspondent to the name, credit, and situation of their supposed authors.

(8) There is in the evangelical history an extraordinary cumulation of testimony; but our habitual mode of reading the Scriptures sometimes causes us to overlook this circumstance. (γ) When a passage in anywise relating to the history of Christ, is read to us out of any writing of the apostolic age which is not included in the Sacred Canon, we are immediately sensible of the confirmation it affords to the Scripture account. Now supposing we had before derived our knowledge of the Christian history solely from the Gospel of St. Matthew, and were merely aware that St. Luke's Gospel was extant and acknowledged—if we were now to look into it for the first time, and were to find in it many of the facts, and the same series of transactions, recorded by St. Matthew; and also many other facts of a similar nature added, and the same general character of Christ preserved; should we not feel strongly impressed by this discovery of fresh evidence? Should we not feel a renewal of the same impression, on first reading the Gospel of St. John? And should we not perceive the strong attestation afforded by that of St. Mark? This successive disclosure of four separate histories would satisfy us that the subject had a foundation: and when, amidst the variety arising from the different information, or the different choice of the several writers, we should have observed many facts to stand the same in all; we should conclude that these facts at least were of undoubted credit and publicity. If after this we should discover a contemporary continuation of the above-mentioned histories, relating the effects which, subsisting at this day, were produced by the extraordinary causes detailed in those histories; we should think the reality of the original story not a little established thereby. If subsequent inquiries should bring to our knowledge, one after another, letters written by some principal agents in the business, constantly assuming and recognising the original story, agitating the questions arising out of it, pressing the obligations resulting from it, advising and *directing* those who acted upon it; surely we should

find in every one of these a still further support to the conclusion we should have formed. But the weight of this successive confirmation is in a great measure unperceived by us. For, being accustomed from our infancy to regard the New Testament as one book, we view its different parts, not as distinct attestations, but as different portions of a single evidence: yet the very discrepancies amongst the several writings comprised in it, prove that they are separate, and most of them independent productions (γ).

Again, these writings are such as would naturally appear at the different periods when they were written; and their reception has been such as they would naturally meet with, if they were genuine. (δ) Whilst the ministry of Christ was recent, and the apostles were busied in preaching, in travelling, and in forming and regulating societies of converts, and were harassed by frequent persecution; it is not probable that they would think of writing histories, though some of them would be likely to address letters upon the subject of their mission, which would be received with a respect proportioned to the character of the writers. The extension of Christianity, which would prevent the instruction of its members by a personal intercourse with the apostles, and the possible circulation of imperfect or erroneous narratives, would soon teach some of them the expediency of sending forth authentic memoirs of the life and doctrines of their Master. When such memoirs appeared, other accounts, the existence of many of which St. Luke mentions[a], would naturally fall into disuse and neglect; whilst these, maintaining their reputation, would make their way into the hands of Christians of every country (δ) (8).

III. Though the genuineness of the historical books of the New Testament is undoubtedly a point of importance, (9) because the weight of their evidence is augmented by our knowledge of the situation and conduct of their authors (9); yet it is not essentially necessary to establish this point in order to prove that they relate the story published by the apostles and first emissaries of Christianity. (10) Supposing that we possessed no other in-

[a] Luke i. 1.

formation concerning these books than that they were in existence in, or near the time of the apostles; that they were used, repeated, and relied upon by Christians whom the apostles instructed, and by societies which the apostles founded, as authentic accounts of the transactions upon which the religion rested; this reception would prove that these books, whoever were their authors, must have accorded with what the apostles taught. Now that they *were* in existence and in great reputation at an early period, appears from some ancient testimonies which do not happen to specify the names of the writers: add to which, the fourth Gospel contains averments* which shew that the writer thereof was an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ; and the author of the third Gospel, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, by often using the first person plural in the Acts, declares himself to have been a contemporary of all, and a companion of one of the original preachers of the religion (10).

CHAPTER IX.

The history recorded in our Scriptures is the miraculous story for which many of the immediate followers of the Founder of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, and submitted to new rules of conduct.

WE now proceed to state the proper and distinct proofs which shew not only the general value, but the specific authority, of the New Testament Scriptures, and the high probability there is that they actually came from the persons whose names they bear.

There are, however, *a few preliminary reflections* which present themselves to our notice.

I. (1) The greatest part of spurious Christian writings are utterly lost, and the rest are preserved by some single manuscript; whereas we have a great number of ancient

* See John xix. 35; xxi. 24.

manuscripts of the Scriptures, found in many different and widely separated countries, all of them anterior to the art of printing, some certainly seven or eight hundred, and some probably above one thousand years old. There are also numerous ancient versions of these books; and some of them in languages which have not been spoken for many ages. These facts prove that the Scriptures were current in ancient times, and among many different nations, and were read and sought after far more than any other books (1). There is weight also in Dr. Bentley's observation, (2) that the New Testament has suffered less injury by the errors of transcribers than the works of any profane author of the same size and antiquity; that is, there never was any writing for the preservation and purity of which the world was so careful (2).

II. (3) The language of the New Testament is just such as might be expected from persons in the age and situation of the apostles, and from no other persons. It is the style neither of classic authors, nor of the ancient Christian fathers, but Greek coming from men of Hebrew origin; that is, abounding with Hebraic and Syriac idioms, such as would naturally be found in the writings of those who used a language, which was spoken indeed where they lived, but was not the common dialect of the country. Now who could forge the style and language of the Scriptures? The Christian fathers were for the most part totally ignorant of Hebrew. The few who were not, wrote in a language bearing no resemblance to that of the New Testament. The Nazarenes used chiefly, perhaps almost entirely, St. Matthew's Gospel; and therefore cannot be suspected of forging the rest of the sacred writings. This peculiarity, therefore, is a strong proof of the genuineness of the Scriptures: at any rate it proves that they belong to the apostolic age (3).

III. (4) The supernatural events related in these books seem to be the real cause of our questioning their genuineness. Yet the works of Bede exhibit many wonderful relations; but no one, for that reason, doubts that they *were written* by Bede. Nor is any doubt entertained

respecting the genuineness of the Koran, or of Philostratus's history of Apollonius Tyanæus; books in some sort similar to ours (4).

IV. (5) If it had been easy to have obtained currency and reception to forged Christian writings, many would have appeared in the name of Christ himself; because they would have been received with far more avidity than any other. Yet (a) the epistle of Christ to Abgarus king of Edessa, is the only attempt of the kind deserving of the smallest notice; and this is a piece of a very few lines, which is not even mentioned by any writer of the first three centuries, and though found in the work of Eusebius is probably an interpolation, as it was universally rejected after the publication of that work (a) (5).

V. (6) If the ascription of the first three Gospels to their respective authors had been arbitrary or conjectural, they would have been ascribed to more eminent men. There is hardly any one of the apostles of whom less is said than of St. Matthew, or of whom the little that is said is less calculated to magnify his character. Of Mark nothing is said in the Gospels; and what is said of any person of that name in the Acts and the Epistles, bestows no praise or eminence upon him. The name of Luke is mentioned only in St. Paul's epistles, and that very transiently [a] (6).

VI. (7) Christians soon arrived at a very general agreement upon the subject of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, though (β) there was a great diversity of opinion upon other points, and though it does not appear that there was any interference of public authority before the council of Laodicea, A.D. 363. And even this consisted of no more than thirty or forty bishops of Lydia and the adjoining countries, who probably rather declared than regulated the judgment of some neighbouring churches; beyond which its authority does not seem to have extended (β) (7).

These considerations are not to be neglected; but the

[a] Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.

strength of the argument is *ancient testimony*. From this, which far exceeds the evidence of the genuineness of all other ancient books, (8) we have much stronger reason for believing the Gospels to have been written by the persons whose names they bear, than that the Commentaries were written by Cæsar, the Æneid by Virgil, or the Orations by Cicero (8).

The following are the allegations upon the subject of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, which are capable of being established by proof:

(9) I. That the historical books of the New Testament, meaning thereby the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted, or alluded to, by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were contemporary with the Apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present.

II. That when they are quoted, or alluded to, they are quoted or alluded to with peculiar respect, as books *sui generis:* as possessing an authority which belonged to no other books, and as conclusive in all questions and controversies amongst Christians.

III. That they were, in very early times, collected into a distinct volume.

IV. That they were distinguished by appropriate names and titles of respect.

V. That they were publicly read and expounded in the religious assemblies of the early Chistians.

VI. That commentaries were written upon them, harmonies formed out of them, different copies carefully collated, and versions of them made into different languages.

VII. That they were received by Christians of different sects, by many heretics as well as Catholics, and usually appealed to by both sides in the controversies which arose in those days.

VIII. That the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, *thirteen* Epistles of St. Paul, the First Epistle of John, and *the First of Peter,* were received, without doubt, by those

who doubted concerning the other books which are included in our present canon.

IX. That the Gospels were attacked by the early adversaries of Christianity, as books containing the accounts upon which the religion was founded.

X. That formal catalogues of authentic Scriptures were published, in all which our present sacred histories were included.

XI. That these propositions cannot be affirmed of any other books claiming to be books of Scripture; by which are meant those books which are commonly called apocryphal books of the New Testament (9).

SECTION I.

The historical books of the New Testament, meaning thereby the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted, or alluded to, by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were contemporary with the Apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present.

THE medium of proof stated in this proposition is of all others the most unquestionable, and the least liable to fraud; and it is not diminished by the lapse of ages. The fact that Bishop Burnet in the History of his Own Times has inserted extracts from Lord Clarendon's History, proves that he received that history as Lord Clarendon's work, and as an authentic account. Quintilian has quoted as Cicero's the passage: "Si quid est in me ingenii, Judices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum—;" which is strong evidence that the oration opening with this address, actually came from Cicero's pen. These instances may serve to point out the nature and value of the argument.

The testimonies under this proposition are the following:

I. There is extant an epistle ascribed to BARNABAS *the companion of St.* Paul, and quoted as such by Clement

of Alexandria, A.D. 194, and by Origen, A.D. 230. It is mentioned by Eusebius, A.D. 315, and by Jerome, A.D. 392, as a well known ancient work in their time. It purports to have been written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, and certainly bears the character of that age. The following remarkable passage occurs in it: "Let us therefore beware lest it come upon us, *as it is written*, There are many called, few chosen." Now the text here quoted occurs twice in St. Matthew's Gospel, and in no other book now known. And it should be observed that the writer of this epistle was a Jew, and the phrase "it is written," was the very form in which the Jews quoted their Scriptures. There are also several other passages in the epistle, containing the same sentiments, and two or three formed of the same words, as passages in St. Matthew's Gospel.

II. We are in possession of an epistle of CLEMENT, bishop of Rome, whom ancient writers assert to be the Clement whom St. Paul mentions[a]. This epistle is addressed to the church of Corinth. It is spoken of by the ancients as acknowledged by all: and Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, about A.D. 170, that is, about eighty or ninty years after the epistle was written, expressly bears witness "that it had been wont to be read in that church from ancient times." In it the Corinthian church are exhorted to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus;" and these are given nearly in the same manner as in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. And it is worthy of remark, that the quotations from the Gospels which are found in this epistle or in any other early Christian writing, are always introduced without hesitation, doubt, or apology. It is also observable, that as this epistle was written in the name of the church of Rome, and was addressed to and received by the church of Corinth, it ought to be taken as exhibiting the judgment of these churches themselves, as well as of Clement, as to the authority of the books referred to.

It may be said that as Clement has not used words of *quotation, it is not* certain that he refers to any book

[a] Phil. iv. 3.

whatever—he might have heard what were the words of Christ. But no such inference can be drawn; for, first, Clement, without any mark of reference, uses a very peculiar passage which was undoubtedly taken from the Epistle to the Romans, and also some very singular sentiments in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Secondly, there are many sentences of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, standing in Clement's epistle without any sign of quotation, which, however, are certainly quotations; because it appears that Clement had St. Paul's Epistle before him, inasmuch as in one place he says, "Take into your hands the Epistle of the blessed apostle Paul." Thirdly, this method of adopting the words of Scripture without acknowledgement, was in general use amongt the most ancient Christian writers. But admitting that Clement had heard these words from the first teachers of Christianity; with respect to the precise point of our argument, namely, that the Scriptures contain what the apostles taught, this supposition may serve almost as well.

III. We have a book, most probably genuine, called the Shepherd or Pastor of HERMAS, a person who is mentioned by St. Paul near the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans. It purports to have been written during the lifetime of Clement, and its antiquity is incontestible, from the quotations of it by Irenæus, A.D. 178; Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 194; Tertullian, A.D. 200; Origen, A.D. 230. In this piece there are allusions to some of the parables, doctrines, and expressions of Christ, as contained in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John.

IV. The epistles of IGNATIUS, who became bishop of Antioch about thirty-seven years after Christ's ascension, are referred to by Polycarp his contemporary; by Irenæus, A.D. 178; by Origen, A.D. 230; and by Eusebius and Jerome. These epistles contain various passages and expressions undoubtedly borrowed from the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, but not distinguished by marks of quotation. Ignatius also quotes St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians; in one place by name, yet in several others *without acknowledgment*.

V. Of POLYCARP, who had been taught by the apostles and by them appointed bishop of Smyrna, we have a short epistle wherein there are nearly forty clear allusions to the books of the New Testament.

VI. PAPIAS, a hearer of St. John, tells us that St. Mark collected his accounts from St. Peter's preaching, and that St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew; which proves that the first and second Gospels publicly bore the names of Matthew and Mark.

VII. About twenty years after Papias, follows JUSTIN MARTYR, who flourished in Syria. His two principal writings, though not addressed to Christian readers, contain between twenty and thirty quotations from the four Gospels and the Acts, certain, distinct, and copious. On the other hand, in all his works, from which an almost complete life of Christ might be compiled, he no where refers to any thing as said or done by our Lord which is not related in the present Gospels, except in two instances. The one of these is of a saying of Christ. The other is of a fiery or luminous appearance on Jordan at Christ's baptism, which is mentioned, however, in an obviously different manner from the descent of the Holy Ghost, which rests upon Scriptural authority: "As Jesus descended into the water," says Justin, "a fire also was kindled in Jordan; and when he came up out of the water, *the apostles of this our Christ have written* that the Holy Ghost lighted upon him as a dove."—Although Justin mentions not the names of the authors of the historical Scriptures, he calls them "Memoirs composed by the Apostles and their Companions."

VIII. HEGESIPPUS, who came about thirty years after Justin, relates that, travelling from Palestine to Rome, he found that in every succession and in every city, the same doctrine is taught which the Law and the Prophets and the *Lord* teacheth. Now, by the word "Lord," Hegesippus must have intended some writing or writings containing the teaching of Christ; for it is only in this sense that the term combines with the terms "Law and Prophets" which *denote writings*, and together with them admits of the verb "*teacheth.*" And that these writings were those of the

New Testament, is rendered probable from the fact that the fragments of his works now remaining, shew that Hegesippus expressed divers things in the style of the Gospels and the Acts; and that he referred to the history in the second chapter of St. Matthew, and recited a text of that Gospel as spoken by our Lord.

IX. In an epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne in France, written about the year 170, there are exact references to the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John, and to the Acts. And we may carry the testimony of these churches to a higher period; for the early life of Pothinus their bishop, who was then ninety years old, must have joined on with the times of the apostles.

X. IRENÆUS, who flourished in France, had been a disciple of Polycarp the disciple of St. John. He expressly asserts that the story contained in our Gospels is that which the inspired apostles published abroad. He tells us that St. Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew "while Peter and Paul were at Rome;" that after their death, "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter," recorded the things preached by St. Peter; that "Luke, the companion of Paul," wrote down the Gospel preached by St. Paul; and that "John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia." He declares that the tradition of the apostles, transmitted through an uninterrupted succession of bishops, was held sacred in every church; and at the same time he asserts the authority of the written records: whence we may conclude that the oral and written traditions were conformable to each other. His fancifully endeavouring to shew that there could be neither more nor less than four Gospels, serves to prove that four, and only four, were then acknowledged. That these were our Gospels appear from many other places in this writer besides that already alleged. He mentions how St. Matthew begins his Gospel, how Mark begins and ends his, and their supposed reasons for so doing; he enumerates at length the several passages of *Christ's history* in St. Luke, which are not found in any of

the other evangelists; and he states St. John's particular design in composing his Gospel, and accounts for its introductory doctrinal declarations.

Furthermore, Irenæus asserts the veracity of the Acts. He has also accurately collected the several texts in which the writer thereof is represented as accompanying St. Paul; which leads him to deliver a summary of almost the whole of the last twelve chapters of that book.

In an author thus abounding with references and allusions to the Scriptures, there is not one to any apocryphal Christian writer whatever.

The value of the foregoing testimony is augmented by the consideration that it is the concurring testimony of writers who lived in countries remote from one another.

XI. Merely observing that there are in the remaining works of Athenagoras, clear references to St. Mark and St. Luke, and in those of Theophilus, though they are addressed to heathens, evident allusions to St. Matthew and St. John, and probable allusions to St. Luke; observing also that the works of Miltiades, described by Eusebius as "monuments of zeal for the Divine Oracles," and the Commentaries of Pantænus upon the holy Scriptures, mentioned by Jerome, are now lost; we come to CLEMENT of Alexandria, who followed Irenæus at the distance of only sixteen years. In the works of his which are now extant, the four Gospels are repeatedly quoted by the names of their authors, and the Acts is expressly ascribed to St. Luke. In one place, after mentioning a particular circumstance, he adds: "We have not this passage *in the four Gospels delivered to us*, but in that according to the Egyptians;" which puts a marked distinction between our histories and all others.

XII. Immediately after Clement, that is, not more than 150 years after the publication of the Gospels, comes TERTULLIAN, who largely quotes from them, and mentions their number, antiquity, and universal reception, as well as the names of their authors, of whom he correctly designates *John and Matthew* "apostles," and Luke and Mark "apostolical men." He ascribes the Acts to St. Luke, and fre-

quently cites it. And he quotes no Christian writing as of equal authority with the Scriptures, and no spurious book whatever.

XIII. Between Tertullian and ORIGEN of Alexandria, there is an interval of only thirty years; and that is occupied by a number of Christian writers whose works only remain in fragments and quotations, but in every one of which the Gospels are referred to; the works of Hippolytus containing, indeed, an abstract of the whole Gospel history. It is the declaration of Origen, as preserved by Eusebius, "That the four Gospels alone are received without dispute by the whole Church of God under heaven." And with this testimony, the works of Origen which remain, entirely correspond. He also ascribes the Acts to St. Luke, and asserts that the Scriptures were read by every body.

Origen notices certain apocryphal Gospels in order to censure them. He uses, indeed, four writings of this sort; that is, throughout his voluminous works, he once, or twice at the most, quotes each of the four; but it is always with reprobation or caution. On the other hand, his writings abound with quotations of the Scriptures.

XIV. Omitting the testimony of Origen's scholars, Gregory bishop of Neocesarea and Dionysius of Alexandria, as a repetition of his, we come to CYPRIAN bishop of Carthage, who flourished within twenty years after Origen. "The church," says this father, "is watered, like Paradise, by four rivers, *i. e.* by the four Gospels." And he constantly cites them as well as the Acts, but not any spurious or apocryphal writing.

XV. Passing over a crowd of writers within forty years from Cyprian's time, who either quote the historical Scriptures of the New Testament, or speak of them with profound respect; we may single out VICTORIN bishop of Pettaw in Germany, on account of the remoteness of his situation from that of Origen and Cyprian. He comments upon the four beasts in the Revelations, fancifully shewing them to be symbols of the four Gospels; and he also expressly cites the Acts of the Apostles.

XVI. ARNOBIUS and LACTANTIUS, about the year 300,

composed formal arguments upon the credibility of the Christian religion. As these were addressed to Gentiles, the authors do not quote Christian books *by name*, one of them giving this very reason for his reserve; but they have given a summary of almost every thing in the Evangelists. Arnobius also declares that these historians were eye-witnesses of the facts they relate.

XVII. EUSEBIUS bishop of Cæsarea, A. D. 314, remarks with great nicety in his Evangelical Demonstration, the delicacy of two of the Evangelists in their manner of noticing any circumstance which regarded themselves, and of St. Mark, as writing under the direction of St. Peter, in the circumstances regarding him; in illustrating which he copiously quotes from each of the Evangelists. The whole passage proves that the Gospels were then generally studied with attention and exactness. In his Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius speaks of the universal reception of St. John's Gospel, and shows that it was written last to supply the omissions of the other three, especially as to the period prior to John the Baptist's imprisonment. And in all his voluminous works this author uses no spurious Christian writers whatever.

This branch of our evidence may be closed here; for Scripture has been since so constantly and copiously quoted and referred to, that there is no room for any question upon the subject.

SECTION II.

When the Scriptures are quoted, or alluded to, they are quoted with peculiar respect, as books sui generis; *as possessing an authority which belonged to no other books; and as conclusive in all questions and controversies amongst Christians.*

BESIDES the general strain of reference and quotation, uniformly and strongly indicating this distinction, the following may be regarded as specific testimonies:

I. *THEOPHILUS*, who was bishop of Antioch little more

than a century after the New Testament was written, says: "The like things are to be found in the Prophets and the Gospels, because that all, being inspired, spoke by one and the same Spirit of God."

II. A writer against Artemon, probably about one hundred and fifty-eight years after the publication of the Scriptures, in a passage quoted by Eusebius, uses these expressions: "Possibly what they say might have been credited, if *first of all the Divine Scriptures* did not contradict them, *and then* the writings of certain brethren more ancient than the times of Victor."

III. In a piece ascribed to HIPPOLYTUS, who lived near the same time, the author professing "to draw from the sacred fountain," and to set before his correspondent from the Sacred Scriptures what might afford him satisfaction, immediately proceeds to quote St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, and afterwards many books of the New Testament.

IV. "*Our* assertions and discourses," saith ORIGEN, "are unworthy of credit; we must receive the Scriptures as witnesses." He insists upon the duty of prayer, from the Divine Scriptures.

V. CYPRIAN, bishop of Carthage, exhorts Christian teachers, in all doubtful cases, "to go back to the fountain, and . . . . recur to the Gospels and apostolic writings."

VI. NOVATUS, a Roman contemporary with Cyprian, appeals to the Scriptures as the authority by which all errors were to be repelled, and disputes decided.

VII. Twenty years afterwards, ANATOLIUS, bishop of Laodicea, says of those whom he opposed: "They can by no means prove their point by the authority of the Divine Scripture."

VIII. THE ARIANS, who sprung up about fifty years after this, argued strenuously against the use of the words "consubstantial" and "essence," and like phrases, "because they were not in Scripture." And one of them said to Augustine: "If you allege any thing from the Divine Scriptures, which are common to both, I must hear. But unscriptural expressions deserve no regard."

ATHANASIUS, the great antagonist of Arianism, having enumerated the books of the Old and New Testaments, adds: "These are the fountain of salvation . . . . Let no man add to them, or take any thing from them."

IX. CYRIL, bishop of Jerusalem, about twenty years after Arianism appeared, says, that concerning the faith, "not the least article ought to be delivered without the Divine Scriptures." And of these he has left us a catalogue.

X. Twenty years afterwards, EPIPHANIUS challenges the Arians to produce any passage of the Old or New Testament favouring their sentiments.

XI. PŒBADIUS, a Gallic bishop, about thirty years after the council of Nice, testifies that "the bishops of that council first consulted the Sacred Volumes, and then declared their faith."

XII. BASIL, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, contemporary with Epiphanius, says that those who are taught ought to be careful to embrace only what is agreeable to the Scriptures.

XIII. EPHRAIM, the Syrian, says: "The truth written in the Sacred Volume of the Gospel is a perfect rule. Nothing can be taken from it nor added to it, without great guilt."

XIV. JEROME observes concerning the quotations of Christian writers who were ancient in the year 400, that they made a distinction between books; some they quoted as of authority, and others not: which observation relates to the books of Scripture compared with other writings.

SECTION III.

The Scriptures were in very early times collected into a distinct volume.

I. IGNATIUS, a contemporary of the apostles, speaks of "the Gospel" and "the Apostles," in terms which render *it very probable* that he meant by the Gospel, the volume

of the Gospels, and by the Apostles, the volume of their Epistles; especially as about eighty years after this, Clement of Alexandria says that the "Gospel" and "Apostles" were the names whereby the writings of the New Testament, and their division, were usually expressed.

II. EUSEBIUS relates that Quadratus and some others, the immediate successors of the apostles, travelled abroad "to preach Christ, and deliver the Scripture of the Divine Gospels."

III. IRENÆUS, A.D. 178, puts the Evangelic and Apostolic writings in connexion with the Law and the Prophets; manifestly intending by the one, a collection of Christian, as by the other, a collection of Jewish sacred writings. And

IV. MELITO, at this time bishop of Sardis, mentions the *Old* Testament: whence we may infer that there was then a volume or collection of writings called the *New* Testament.

V. CLEMENT of Alexandria, about fifteen years afterwards, remarks: "There is a consent between the Law and the Prophets, the Apostles and the Gospel." From this and many other expressions of Clement, it is evident that the Christian Scriptures were divided into two parts under the general titles of the Gospels and Apostles.

VI. In TERTULLIAN, we read of "Prophets, Gospels, and Apostles;" of the Gospels under the name of the "Evangelic Instrument;" of the whole volume as the "New Testament;" and of the two parts, the "Gospels and Apostles."

VII. From many writers also of the third century, and especially from CYPRIAN, it appears that the Scriptures were divided into two codes or volumes; one called the "Gospels or Scriptures of the Lord," and the other, "the Apostles or Epistles of the Apostles."

VIII. The argument of EUSEBIUS upon the order of the Gospels, proves that the four Gospels had been, with much consideration, collected into a volume, to the exclusion of every other, by those who were called ancients in his time.

In the Diocletian persecution, A.D. 303, many suffered *death rather* than deliver up the volume of the New Tes-

tament to be burnt; and those who did deliver it up, were accounted as apostate. On the other hand, Constantine gave directions for multiplying and magnificently adorning it at the expense of the imperial treasury.

SECTION IV.

Our present Sacred Writings were soon distinguished by appropriate names and titles of respect.

I. POLYCARP, the disciple of St. John, calls them "the Holy Scriptures" and "the Oracles of the Lord."

II. JUSTIN MARTYR, about thirty years afterwards, cites our present historical Scriptures as "the memoirs composed by the Apostles which are called Gospels."

III. DIONYSIUS, bishop of Corinth, thirty years after Justin, speaks of "the Scriptures of the Lord."

IV. About the same time they are called by IRENÆUS, "Divine Scriptures"—"Divine Oracles"—"Scriptures of the Lord"—"Evangelic and Apostolic Writings."

V. By his contemporary THEOPHILUS, St. Matthew's Gospel is quoted under the title of "the Evangelical Voice;" and within fifteen years afterwards, CLEMENT of Alexandria styles the New Testament writings, "Sacred Books"—"Divine Scriptures"—"Divinely inspired Scriptures"—"Scriptures of the Lord"—"the true Evangelical Canon."

VI. TERTULLIAN, who joins on with Clement, besides most of the titles above noticed, calls the Gospel, "our Digesta;" probably in allusion to some collection of Roman Laws.

VII. We find the same titles in ORIGEN, who came about thirty years afterwards, and other no less strong ones in addition; among which are the expressions, "the Old and New Testament"—"the Ancient and New Scriptures"—"the Ancient and New Oracles."

VIII. In CYPRIAN, who was not twenty years later, they are called, "Books of the Spirit"—"Divine Fountains"—"Fountains of the Divine Fulness."

SECTION V.

Our Scriptures were publicly read and expounded in the religious assemblies of the early Christians.

I. JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 140, thus relates the general and established usage of the Christian Church: "The Memoirs of the Apostles, (*i. e.*, our Gospels[a]) or the Writings of the Prophets, are read according as the time allows: and when the reader has ended, the president makes a discourse, exhorting to the imitation of so excellent things."

II. TERTULLIAN, about fifty years afterwards, says: "We come together to recollect the Divine Scriptures; we nourish our faith, raise our hope, confirm our trust, by the Sacred Word."

III. EUSEBIUS records of Origen, that when he went into Palestine about the year 216, the bishops of that country desired him to discourse and expound the Scriptures publicly in the church, though he was not yet ordained a presbyter. The usage here recognised is mentioned by ORIGEN himself: "This," says he, "we do when the Scriptures are read in the church, and when the discourse for explication is delivered to the people." And many homilies of his upon the Scriptures of the New Testament, delivered by him, are still extant.

IV. CYPRIAN, who flourished within twenty years of Origen, speaks of having ordained two "confessors" to be "readers," who, it appears by the reason he assigns for his choice, were to read the Gospel publicly in the church.

V. In a great number of writers of the fourth century, there are intimations of the same custom; but in AUGUSTIN its universality and utility are expressly declared.

That the epistle of Clement was read in some, and the Shepherd of Hermas in many churches, does not subtract much from the value of the argument; for these were the genuine writings of apostolical men, and there is no evidence that any other Gospels than the four we receive were ever admitted to this distinction.

[a] *See* Section I. Art. VII., and Section IV. Art. II.

SECTION VI.

Commentaries were anciently written upon the Scriptures; harmonies formed out of them; different copies carefully collected; and versions made of them into different languages.

THE industry bestowed on these books is an incontestible proof of the value set upon them by the early Christians: which value must have consisted solely in their genuineness and truth. It is also a proof that they were even *then* considered ancient; for men do not write comments upon publications of their own times.

I. TATIAN, about the year 170, composed a harmony or collation of the Gospels.

II. PANTÆNUS, a man of great learning and reputation, wrote many commentaries upon the Holy Scriptures, twenty years after Tatian.

III. CLEMENT of Alexandria wrote short explications of many books of the Old and the New Testament.

IV. TERTULLIAN appeals from the authority of a later version then in use, to the "authentic Greek."

V. An anonymous author quoted by Eusebius, who appears to have written about the year 212, appeals to the *ancient copies* of the Scriptures, in refutation of some corrupt readings alleged by the followers of Artemon.

VI. EUSEBIUS mentions "the monuments of the laudable industry" of many ancient Christian writers, and the interpretations of the Divine Scripture given in their treatises.

VII. The last five testimonies may be referred to the year 200; immediately after which, a period of thirty years gives us JULIUS AFRICANUS, who wrote an epistle wherein he endeavours, by the distinction of natural and legal descent, to reconcile the apparent difference in the genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke; AMMONIUS, who composed a harmony of the four Gospels; and ORIGEN, who wrote commentaries or homilies upon most of the books of the New Testament.

VIII. In addition to these, the third century likewise

contains DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, a very learned man, who accurately compared the accounts in the four Gospels of the time of Christ's resurrection; VICTORIN, bishop of Pettaw in Germany, who wrote comments upon St. Matthew's Gospel; and LUCIAN, a presbyter of Antioch, and HESYCHIUS, an Egyptian bishop, who published editions of the New Testament.

IX. We know of fourteen writers upon the New Testament of the fourth century. Amongst these it will be sufficient to mention the following:

EUSEBIUS wrote upon the discrepancies of the Gospels; and likewise a treatise wherein he pointed out what things are related by four, what by three, what by two evangelists, and what by only one of them. He also testifies that "the writings of the apostles had obtained such an esteem, as to be translated into every language, both of Greeks and Barbarians, and diligently studied by all nations."

DAMASUS, bishop of Rome, alludes to the existence of a variety of Greek and Latin commentators.

GREGORY of Nyssen at one time appeals to the most exact copies of St. Mark's Gospel, at another proposes to reconcile the several accounts of the Resurrection given by the four evangelists.

AMBROSE, bishop of Milan, remarked various readings in the Latin copies of the New Testament, and appeals to the original Greek.

JEROME published the New Testament in Latin, corrected by "ancient" Greek copies.

CHRYSOSTOM delivered and published a great many homilies upon the Gospels and the Acts.

It is needless to bring down this article lower: but it is of importance to add, that there is no example of Christian writers of the first three centuries composing comments upon any other books than those of the New Testament, except the single one of Clement of Alexandria commenting upon a book called the Revelation of Peter.

Though the books of the New Testament were written in Greek, with a view to their more extensive circulation, yet it is probable that they would soon be translated into

the language vulgarly spoken in Palestine when Christianity was first established there. Accordingly there is a Syriac translation, used all along, it appears, by the inhabitants of Syria; bearing many internal marks of high antiquity; supported in its pretensions by the uniform tradition of the East; and confirmed by the discovery of many very ancient manuscripts in Europe, where it seems to have been almost unknown until about two hundred years ago, when a copy thereof was sent hither by a bishop of Antioch. This was found to contain all our books, except the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and the Revelation: which books, however, have since been discovered in the Syriac language, in some ancient manuscripts of Europe. In this collection there is no other book besides those in our canon. And the text differs from ours very little, and in nothing that is important.

SECTION VII.

Our Scriptures were received by ancient Christians of different sects and persuasions; by many Heretics as well as Catholics; and were usually appealed to by both sides in the controversies which arose in those days.

AMIDST the numerous disputes upon the authority of the Jewish constitution, the origin of evil, and the nature of Christ, the three most ancient topics of controversy amongst Christians, we perceive in a vast plurality of instances, all sides recurring to the same Scriptures.

I. BASILIDES, about the year 120, rejected the Jewish institution as proceeding from a being inferior to the true God, and was in other respects heretical in his opinions. From the writings of his Catholic opponents, it is however evident that he received St. Matthew's Gospel, and there is no sufficient proof that he rejected any of the other three: on the contrary, he wrote a commentary of twenty-four *books upon the* Gospels.

II. Irenæus, A.D. 172, records that THE VALENTINIANS

endeavoured to fetch arguments for their opinions from the evangelic and apostolic writings. HERACLEON, one of the most celebrated of the sect, who lived probably as early as the year 125, wrote commentaries upon St. Luke and St. John. Some observations of his upon St. Matthew are preserved by Origen. Nor is there any reason to doubt that he received the whole of the New Testament.

III. THE CARPOCRATIANS are charged by Irenæus and Epiphanius with perverting a passage in St. Matthew; which proves that they received that Gospel. Negatively, they are not accused of rejecting any part of the New Testament.

IV. THE SETHIANS, A.D. 150; THE MONTANISTS, A.D. 156; THE MARCOSIANS, A.D. 160; HERMOGENES, A.D. 180; PRAXIAS, A.D. 196; ARTEMON, A.D. 200; and THEODOTUS, A.D. 200, were all heretics engaged in controversies with Catholic Christians, yet they received the Scriptures of the New Testament.

V. TATIAN, who lived in the year 172, was the founder of a sect called Encratites, and was deeply involved in disputes with the Christians of that age, yet he composed a harmony of the four Gospels.

VI. From a writer of about the year 200, quoted by Eusebius, it is apparent that they who at that time contended for the *mere humanity of Christ*, argued from the Scriptures; for they are accused by this writer, of making alterations in their copies, in order to favour their opinions.

VII. The opinions of ORIGEN excited great controversies, yet both the advocates and adversaries of them acknowledged the same Scripture. Celsus reproached the Christians with their dissensions; yet Origen, who has recorded this accusation without contradicting it, nevertheless testifies that the four Gospels were universally received without dispute.

VIII. Epiphanius, in his History of Heretics, relates that PAUL OF SAMOSATA endeavoured to support, by texts of Scripture, his opinions upon the nature of Christ, which, about thirty years after Origen, were the subject of two councils at *Antioch*. And Vincentius Lirinensis, A.D. 434,

says, that Paul and other heretics of the same age urged the testimony of the various books of Scripture explicitly and vehemently.

IX. According to Epiphanius, SABELLIUS received all the Scriptures. And Catholic writers allege the Scriptures as well against his followers as against those of Paul of Samosata, and reply to the arguments which both those sects, whose opinions were diametrically opposite, drew from particular texts.

X. A little before this time, one of the bishops of the council of Carthage said: "I am of opinion that *blasphemous and wicked heretics*, who *pervert* the sacred and adorable words of the Scriptures, should be execrated." Undoubtedly, what they perverted, they received.

XI. THE MILLENNIUM, NOVATIANISM, THE BAPTISM OF HERETICS, THE KEEPING OF EASTER, also divided the opinions of Christians, yet every one appealed to Scripture authority. Dionysius of Alexandria, who flourished A.D. 247, confesses of the Millennarians of Egypt, "that they embraced whatever could be made out by good arguments from the Holy Scriptures." Novatus, A.D. 251, quotes the Gospel with the same respect as other Christians did; and Socrates, about A.D. 440, testifies that "in the disputes between the Catholics and the Novatians, each side endeavoured to support itself by the authority of the Divine Scriptures."

XII. THE DONATISTS, who sprung up A.D. 328, used the same Scriptures as we do. "Produce (says Augustine) some proof from the Scriptures, whose authority is common to us both."

XIII. It is perfectly notorious that in THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY, which arose soon after the year 300, both sides appealed to the same Scriptures with equal professions of deference and regard.

XIV. THE PRISCILLIANISTS, A.D. 378, and THE PELAGIANS, A.D. 405, received the same Scriptures as we do.

XV. It will be sufficient to add the testimony of CHRYSOSTOM, who lived near the year 400. He expressly affirms the proposition maintained in this section, by observing *that the truth of* the evangelical history is attested by its

general reception by heretics, either "entire or in part." With respect to the words "entire or in part," it should be observed, that if all the parts ever questioned in our Gospels were given up, it would not affect the miraculous origin of the religion in the smallest degree.

SECTION VIII.

The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, the First Epistle of St. John, and the First of St. Peter, were received, without doubt, by those who doubted concerning the other books which are included in our present Canon.

THIS proposition is stated, because, if made out, it shews that amongst the early Christians, the authenticity of their books was a subject of consideration and inquiry; and that where there was a cause of doubt, they did doubt.

I. JEROME records of CAIUS, who was probably a presbyter of Rome, and who flourished near the year 200, that, reckoning up only thirteen epistles of St. Paul, he said the fourteenth, which is inscribed to the Hebrews, is not his; and then Jerome adds: "With the Romans to this day, it is not looked upon as Paul's." And Eusebius says: "By *some* of the Romans, this epistle is not thought to be the Apostle's."

II. ORIGEN, about twenty years after Caius, speaks of the doubts entertained by some as to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the second of St. Peter, and the second and third of St. John; but he speaks of or quotes the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and the First Epistle of St. Peter, and of St. John, as *undoubted* books of Scripture.

III. DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, A.D. 247, doubts whether the book of Revelation was written by St. John, and represents the diversity of opinion then, and previously existing upon the subject; yet he uses and collates the four Gospels in a manner shewing that there was not a doubt of their

authority, and indeed of their sole authority, as authentic histories of Christ.

IV. EUSEBIUS, in one place mentions St. John's Gospel as "acknowledged of all;" and in another place where he treats "of the Scriptures *universally acknowledged*, and of those that are not such," he ranks the four Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles of St. Paul, the First Epistle of St. John, and the Epistle of St. Peter, among the former. Respecting the book of Revelation, he speaks doubtfully. "Of the controverted, but yet well known or approved by the most," he enumerates the Epistle of St. James, that of St. Jude, the Second of St. Peter, and the Second and Third of St. John. He reckons up five others not in our Canon, which he calls *spurious*, whereof "none (he says) of the ecclesiastical writers in the succession of the Apostles, have vouchsafed to make any mention." Eusebius was extremely conversant in the writings of Christians of prior ages, from the apostles' time to his own. Upon the testimony of these, his opinion and that of his contemporaries appear to have been founded. The books which he terms "books universally acknowledged," are in fact, used and quoted in the remaining works of Christian writers during the 250 years previous to his time, much more frequently than, and in a different manner from, those the authority of which he tells us was disputed.

SECTION IX.

Our historical Scriptures were attacked by the early adversaries of Christianity, as containing the accounts upon which the Religion was founded.

I. NEAR the middle of the second century, CELSUS, a heathen philosopher, wrote a professed treatise against Christianity. This is now lost; but the words and arguments thereof are frequently recited in Origen's answer to it[a].

[a] Origen appears to have given Celsus's words very faithfully: one reason for thinking so, is, that the objection as stated by Origen, is sometimes stronger than his own answer.

1. Celsus, or the Jew whom he personates, uses these words: "I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and those, too, different from those written by the disciples of Jesus, but I purposely omit them." This Origen terms a mere oratorical flourish; for in truth, if Celsus could have contradicted the disciples upon good evidence in any material point, he would not have omitted to do so. Nevertheless, the passage is sufficient to prove that in the time of Celsus, there were books containing a history of Jesus, well known and allowed to be written by his disciples, that is, those who had been taught by Jesus himself; for Celsus calls the followers of Jesus in general, Christians or believers, or the like.

2. In another place Celsus accuses the Christians of altering the Gospel. He refers to some various readings of particular passages; for he goes on to object that, when one reading has been confuted, they disown that and fly to another. It does not appear, however, that Celsus specified any particular instances; and without such specification, the charge is of no value.—But it serves to prove that the Gospel history was even then of some standing; for various readings and corruptions do not occur in recent productions.

3. A third passage runs thus: "These things then we have alleged to you out of *your own writings*, not needing any other weapons." This boast manifestly supposes that these writings possessed an authority by which Christians confessed themselves to be bound.

4. By various allusions[a] of Celsus, it is evident that he referred to our present Gospels. And it is very material to remark that he referred to no other accounts of Christ whatever.

II. PORPHYRY, in the third century, wrote a large and formal treatise against the Christian Religion. This is not now extant; but enough of it may be gathered from his opponents to prove that he attacked the contents of our present Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, considering

[a] See Paley's Evidences.

that to overthrow *them*, was to overthrow the religion[a]. Speaking of St. Matthew, he calls him "*your Evangelist;*" he also uses the term *Evangelists*. And it does not appear that he considered any history of Christ except the Gospels, as having authority with Christians.

III. A third great writer against Christianity was the EMPEROR JULIAN, who lived in the fourth century. By various long extracts transcribed from this author by Cyril and Jerome, it appears that he recited sayings of Christ and various passages of his history, besides other events[b], in the very words of the Gospels and the Acts; that he stated the early date of these records, and called them by the names they now bear; and that he all along supposed their genuineness and their reception among Christians, as the only authentic memoirs of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, and of the doctrines taught by them.

We have, then, upon the suffrages of men of learning and inquiry, whom it would have greatly availed to have been able to cast a doubt upon the point, strong evidence of the authenticity[c] of the historical books then received by Christians. And from the same source it is evident that these books were the writings we now possess.

SECTION X.

Formal catalogues of authentic Scriptures were published, in all which our present sacred histories were included.

THIS species of evidence naturally comes later than the rest, as catalogues of books of Scripture would not appear until Christian writings became numerous, or until some writings were put forth, claiming to be considered as books

[a] See Paley's Evidences. [b] Ibid.

[c] It was upon this very point, indeed, that Porphyry attacked the prophecy of Daniel, insisting that it was written after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, *and maintaining his* charge of forgery by some far-fetched, but very subtle *criticisms.*

of scriptural authority, but not entitled to that distinction. The catalogues, though numerous, and made in countries widely distant from one another, differ very little, and in nothing material, and all contain the four Gospels.

I. In the writings of ORIGEN there are enumerations of the books of Scripture. And in these no books appear beside what are now received.

II. ATHANASIUS delivered a formal catalogue, containing our Scriptures, and no others.

III. CYRIL, bishop of Jerusalem, set forth a catalogue of the Scriptures read in the church at Jerusalem, the same as ours, except that the "Revelation" is omitted.

IV. THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA delivered an authoritative catalogue like Cyril's.

V. From the year 363 to near the conclusion of the fourth century, we have catalogues by EPIPHANIUS, by GREGORY NAZIANZEN, by PHILASTER, bishop of Brescia in Italy, by AMPHILOCHIUS, bishop of Iconium, containing all our books, and no others.

VI. JEROME wrote a catalogue like to these, with the exception of its intimating a doubt concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews.

VII. AUGUSTINE, and RUFEN, presbyter of Aquileia, contemporaries of Jerome, likewise published catalogues containing all our present Scriptures, and no other books.

SECTION XI.

These propositions cannot be predicated of any of those books which are commonly called Apocryphal Books of the New Testament.

To support this proposition, and thereby shew that there are just grounds for preferring our present Gospels to all other accounts of the institution of Christianity, it may be observed,

I. That beside our Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, *no* Christian history claiming to be written by an

Apostle or apostolical man, is quoted within 300 years after the birth of Christ by any writer now extant or known; or if quoted, is not quoted without marks of censure and rejection.

To this a Hebrew Gospel, which was circulated under the various titles of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Nazarenes, or of the Ebionites, or of the Twelve, and by some ascribed to St. Matthew, may seem to form an exception. This, however, in the main agreed with our present Gospel of St. Matthew, and whatever it might be, it is referred to only three times: once by Clement of Alexandria, and twice by Origen, but both times with marks of diminution and discredit.

Now, if with this account of the apocryphal Gospels, we compare what is contained in the preceding sections concerning the canonical Scriptures; if we call to mind the innumerable references to them in the remains of writers who lived in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, the part of Africa that used the Latin tongue, in Crete, Greece, Italy, and Gaul, we shall surely perceive a clear and broad line of division between the Christian histories we receive, and all others pretending to similar authority.

II. Of other Christian writings, either wholly or partly of an historical nature, which, though not forgeries, are denominated apocryphal, as being of uncertain or of no authority—there are only two which are noticed by any author of the first three centuries, without express terms of condemnation. The one is "The Preaching of Peter," quoted repeatedly by Clement of Alexandria; the other is "The Revelation of Peter," which is twice cited in a work ascribed to the same Father, and upon which he is said to have written notes.

To the foregoing observations it should be added,

1. That there is no evidence that any apocryphal books whatever existed in the first century, when all our historical books are proved to have been extant.

2. These apocryphal writings were not read in the *churches of Christians;*

3. Were not admitted into their volume;
4. Do not appear in their catalogues;
5. Were not noticed by their adversaries;
6. Were not alleged by different parties as of authority in their controversies;
7. Were not the subjects amongst them of commentaries, versions, collations, expositions;

And finally, beside the silence of three centuries, or evidence within that time of their rejection, they were, with a consent nearly universal, reprobated by Christian writers of succeeding ages.

It may be difficult to account for the origin of the many writings of this kind which existed in the third and fourth centuries; but perhaps the most probable explication is, that they were in general composed with a design of making a profit by their sale, by taking advantage of the pious curiosity of unlearned Christians: indeed many of them were adapted to the particular opinions of particular sects with a view to that purpose. It is probable, however, that they were comparatively very obscure. Among the most noted are the Gospel of the Egyptians, that of Peter, and that of the Hebrews. Yet there is good reason to believe that the first was never seen by Clemens Alexandrinus, a man of almost universal reading. Respecting the second, Serapion, bishop of Antioch, A.D. 200, accidentally heard of such a book being in the hands of the Christians of Rhossus in Cilicia, and obtained a sight of it from some sectaries who used it. And even of the third, which is confessedly at the head of the catalogue of apocryphal writings, Jerome, at the end of the fourth century, was glad to obtain a copy by the favour of the Nazarenes of Berea.

It is observable that all these writings proceed upon the same fundamental history as that disclosed in our Scriptures. They add to, but do not contradict, the facts we acknowledge.

If there is any book of this description which appears to have imposed upon some considerable number of learned

Christians, it is the Sybilline Oracles: but neither the imposture nor its success is surprising. It was at that time universally understood that there existed a prophetic writing called the Sybilline Oracles, the contents of which were kept secret; and that circumstancs would naturally suggest the publication, and at the same time ensure the partial reception, of a forgery under that title, favourable to the already established persuasion of the Christian community.

CHAPTER X.

Recapitulation.

No historical fact seems more certain than that the original propagators of Christianity voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, in the prosecution of their undertaking. The nature of the undertaking, the character of the persons employed therein, the direct opposition of their tenets to the fixed opinions and expectations of the country in which they first advanced them, their complete condemnation of the religion of all other countries, their total want of power or authority, render it in the highest degree probable that this must have been the case. This probability is strengthened by what we know of the execution of the Founder of the institution, and the cruel treatment of his followers in general within thirty years afterwards, as attested by heathen writers. And it is advanced to historical certainty by the evidence of like facts in the various narrations and letters of the New Testament, and in the works of the apostolic fathers; by predictions of persecutions therein ascribed to the Founder of the religion, which must have been either delivered and fulfilled, or so ascribed to him because the event suggested them; by earnest and incessant exhortations to fortitude and patience, which are contained in the same books, and which prove that there was then some extraordinary call for the exercise of these virtues.

It appears to be also sufficiently made out, that both

the teachers and converts of the religion, in consequence of their new profession, adopted a new course of life and behaviour.

(1) The next great question is, what they did this FOR. That it was for a miraculous story that these men labored and suffered, is extremely manifest; because, as to the fundamental article, the designation of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, they could have nothing but miracles to stand upon. Moreover, that the exertions and sufferings of the apostles were for the story we have *now*, is proved by the consideration that as this story is transmitted to us in a circumstantial manner by two of their own number, and by two others personally connected with them; and as each of the Gospels contains enough to prove the truth of the religion, it would be sufficient if any one of our books were genuine; but that the genuineness of all of them is made out, as well by the general arguments which evince the genuineness of the most undisputed remains of antiquity, as by specific proofs, viz., by their being constantly cited, and cited as books *sui generis*, in writings belonging to a period immediately adjoining that in which they were published; by their being in very early times collected into one volume, distinguished by titles of peculiar respect, translated into various languages, digested into harmonies, commented upon, and publicly read and expounded in all parts of the world, and thus in various ways treated as books of singular value and authority; by an universal agreement respecting *them*, whilst doubts were entertained concerning some others; by contending sects appealing to them; by the early adversaries of the religion not disputing their genuineness, but attacking them as the depositaries of the history whereon the religion was founded; by many formal catalogues of these, as of authoritative writings, published in different and widely separated countries; and lastly, by the consideration that these topics of evidence cannot be predicated of any other histories of the same subject.

But it may be shown that ours is the original story without *establishing* the genuineness of the Gospels. (a) For,

as there is no trace or vestige of any other story, as the books in which it is contained were received as authentic memoirs of Christ, in or near the time of the apostles, by persons whom the apostles had taught, and by societies the apostles had founded; as they are corroborated by each other, by another contemporary history, by letters of the apostles, and by a series of Christian writers from the apostolic age down to our own, who all along assume the same general story and occasionally allude to particular parts of it; as the Evangelic account is likewise recognised in a variety of religious institutions early and universally predominant; and as it is incredible, under such circumstances, that the original story should have been entirely forgotten and the present received in its stead; it appears to be sufficiently proved that the Gospels, whoever were their authors, exhibit the story which the apostles told, and for which, consequently, they acted and they suffered (*a*) (1).

(2) If it is so, the religion must be true. These men could not be deceivers. By merely withholding their testimony they might have lived in peace and safety. Would men in such circumstances pretend to have seen what they never saw; assert facts of which they had no knowledge; go about lying, to teach virtue; and though they were not only convinced of Christ's being an impostor, but had seen the success of his imposture in his crucifixion, yet persist in carrying that imposture on, and thus bring upon themselves, for nothing, and with a full knowledge of the consequence, hatred and contumely, danger and death (2)?

OF THE DIRECT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND WHEREIN IT IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EVIDENCE ALLEGED FOR OTHER MIRACLES.

PROPOSITION II.

That there is NOT *satisfactory evidence that persons pretending to be original witnesses of any miracles other than but similar to the Christian miracles, have, in attestation of the accounts they delivered and solely in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts, acted in the same manner as those who pretended to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles.*

CHAPTER I.

IT may be proper to premise how far it appears reasonable that our belief in miraculous accounts should go. (1) If such as Wickliffe or Luther, Whitfield or Wesley, had delivered a narrative involving accounts of miracles alleged to have been wrought within their own knowledge, which could not be resolved into delusion or mistake; and if such men had declared that their life of toils, danger, and sufferings, was undergone in consequence of what they related; and it had appeared that this was really the case; it would seem reasonable to believe that miracles had been witnessed by them. Or if the benevolent Howard had undertaken his labors and journeys in attestation and in consequence of a clear and sensible miracle, it would also appear right to believe him. Or if by writings received without doubt ever since their publication as the works of the companions and disciples of Socrates, it had been made known to us that Socrates professed to perform public miracles at Athens, and that his friends, Phædo, Cebes, Crito, and Simmias, together with Plato, and many of his followers,

relying upon these as certain attestations to his pretensions, did, in order to propagate his doctrines, go about Greece after his death at the hazard of their lives and the certain expense of their ease and tranquillity—our belief of the reality of the miracles alleged would surely be sufficiently warranted; more especially if a change had been wrought by the transaction, in the opinions and conduct of such numbers, as to lay the foundation of an institution and of a system of doctrines now overspreading the greatest part of the civilized world. And in each case it would be an additional source of credit, if the subject of the mission was of importance to the conduct and happiness of life; if the nature of what it delivered, required the sort of proof alleged; if the end was worthy of the means.

If any one calls it credulity to assent to the evidence in these cases, none of which do more than come up to the apostolic history, he should at least produce examples wherein the same evidence has turned out to be fallacious (1). And this contains the precise question to be now agitated.

In stating the comparison between our evidence and what our adversaries may bring into competition with ours, two kinds of distinctions may be proposed:

First. Those which relate to the proof.

Secondly. Those which relate to the miracles.

Those which relate to *the proof*, are the following:

I. (2) We may lay out of the case such accounts of supernatural events as are found only in histories by some ages posterior to those alleged events, of which it is evident that the historian could know little more than his reader. Ours is a contemporary history. This difference alone removes out of our way the miraculous history of Pythagoras, who lived five hundred years before the Christian æra, written by Porphyry and Jamblicus three hundred years after that æra; the prodigies of Livy's history; the fables of the heroic ages; the whole of the Greek, Roman, and Gothic mythology; a great part of the legendary *history of Popish saints*, the very best attested of which is

extracted from the certificates exhibited during the process of their canonization, which seldom takes place till a century after their deaths. It applies also to the miracles of Apollonius Tyanæus, which are contained in a solitary history of his life, published above a hundred years after he died, by Philostratus; and also to some miracles of the third century, especially to the account of Gregory, bishop of Neocesarea, called Thaumaturgus, given by Gregory of Nyssen, who lived one hundred and thirty years after the subject of his panegyric (2).

(3) The value of this distinction is exemplified in the history of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the order of Jesuits. In his life, published about fifteen years after he died, by a Jesuit a companion of his, the very reasons why he was *not* invested with miraculous powers, are industriously stated; and in a republication of the work with additions, fifteen years afterwards, there is a total silence about miracles. But when he had been dead nearly sixty years, the Jesuits, wishing to have the founder of their order canonized, began to attribute to him a catalogue of miracles, which could not then be distinctly disproved (3).

II. (4) We may lay out of the case accounts not published in or near the country to which they relate, and not proved to have been there known or received; such as the accounts of the abovementioned miracles of Apollonius Tyanæus, most of which are related to have been performed in India, and those of Francis Xavier, the Indian missionary, with many others of the Roman breviary. In the case of Christianity, the story was first published, and the Church first planted, at Jerusalem, the scene of the transaction (4).

III. (5) We may lay out of the case transient rumours: for since any man may publish any story, it is only in the future confirmation of an account, its permanency, its increasing in notoriety, its being followed up by subsequent independent accounts, that solid truth can be distinguished *from fugitive lies*. This distinction is altogether on the

side of Christianity. The Christian story was succeeded by a train of actions and events dependent upon it; and the Scripture histories were composed after the first reports must have subsided, and were followed, confirmed, and defended, by a succession of writings of various kinds (5).

IV. We may lay out of the case what may be termed *naked* history. (6) Whether the Christian religion is satisfactorily proved to be true or not, it is not supported by a naked or solitary record, but by an extraordinary cumulation of evidence, direct and indirect, external and internal (6).

V. (7) We may lay out of the case accounts destitute of a sufficient particularity in names, dates, places, and circumstances. (a) In direct history, but in that only (a), such a particularity is a strong mark of truth. From the details in the description of St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck, in the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts, and in the account of the cure and examination of the blind man, in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, these narrations seem evidently to have been founded upon the personal knowledge of the respective historians. Since, however, particularity is not confined to truth, but may characterize a formal, but solely a formal, attempt to deceive, it is a proof of truth only to a certain extent; that is, it is a proof of truth, provided we can depend upon the *probity* of the relater. Now this is a considerable advance in the argument, inasmuch as few charge the evangelists with an express attempt to deceive. But even if we had not entire confidence in their probity, it would scarcely be credible that the numerous particularities in the historical Scriptures were spun out of the imagination, without any fact to go upon (7).

VI. (8) We may lay out of the case such stories of supernatural events as require nothing more than *otiose* assent; stories in which no interest is involved, nothing is to be done or changed in consequence of believing them. To this case belong what is called the love of the marvel-

lous, and most vulgar errors and popular superstitions; most, for instance, of the current reports of apparitions. Those who believe in them do not suffer for their belief. Upon the truth or falsity of such stories nothing depends. But the alleged miracles of Christ and his apostles were not of this kind. They decided, if true, the most important question upon which the human mind can fix its anxiety. Men could not be indifferent in such a case as this. The Jew found his darling partiality to his own nation wounded; the Gentile, his idolatry condemned. Nor was the question merely theoretical. They who believed Christianity acted upon it. Many employed their whole time in publishing the intelligence at the sacrifice of their ease, their fortunes, and their lives: multitudes admitting that intelligence, parted with their habits and gratifications, and regulated themselves by new principles of action, and, in consequence of so doing, were obliged to encounter opposition, danger and sufferings.

(β) The *mere promise* of a future state could not do this: a few wandering fishermen, talking of the resurrection, could produce no effect. It may be said that men easily believe what they anxiously desire. But, anxiety of desire, earnestness of expectation, the vastness of an event, rather causes men to doubt, to dread a fallacy, to distrust, and to examine. When our Lord's resurrection was first reported to the apostles, we are told that they did not believe for joy. This was natural (β) [8].

VII. [9] We may lay out of the case miraculous accounts which come merely in *affirmance* of opinions already formed. It has been long observed that Popish miracles happen in Popish countries, that they make no converts; which proves that stories may be received when they fall in with principles already fixed, though they would not be attempted to be produced in the face of enemies, in opposition to reigning tenets or favourite prejudices, or if a belief in them must draw men away from their accustomed modes of life and rules of action. In the former case, men may even act and suffer on the side and in the cause the miracle sup-

ports, yet not act or suffer for the miracle, but in pursuance of a prior persuasion. The miracle in such case, like any other argument which only confirms what was before believed, is admitted with little examination. Frauds and fallacies may mix themselves with the progress of Christianity, which could not possibly take place in its commencement. The miracles recorded in the New Testament were wrought in the midst of enemies, under a government, a priesthood, and a magistracy, decidedly and vehemently adverse to them and to the pretensions they supported. They produced a *change*. They made converts; and those who were converted gave up their most fixed opinions and most favourite prejudices. Those who acted and suffered in the cause, acted and suffered *for* the miracles; for there was no *anterior* persuasion, reverence, prejudice, or partiality, to induce or account for their conduct. The miracles of Jesus gave birth to his sect; whereas (γ) not a single miracle can be named that was ever offered as a test of the religion of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, of China, *before* their establishment; and no founder of a new sect among Christians has ever pretended to work miracles, and succeeded by his pretensions (γ) (9).

It may be added, that (10) as the Christian miracles were not alleged in support of a prior persuasion, so neither can the apostles be supposed to have been guilty of what are called *pious* frauds. For if they did not believe the miracles, they did not believe the religion; and without that belief, where was the *piety* in publishing miracles in its behalf? Nor can such men for a moment be thought to have promoted the belief of the religion from views of mere political utility. The truth is, that the conduct of the apostles is unaccountable, supposing their story to be false. If bad men, what could have induced them to take such pains to promote virtue? If good men, they would not have gone about the country with a string of lies in their mouths (10).

Of the distinctions which relate to *the miracles themselves, the following* ought to be carefully retained:—

I. (11) It is not necessary to admit as a miracle what can be resolved into a *false perception*. Of this nature were the demon of Socrates, and the visions of St. Anthony, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Colonel Gardiner, and many others, which may be accounted for by a momentary insanity. The cases under this head, are mostly cases of visions or voices, almost always of a solitary witness, and always of *momentary* miracles, that is, (δ) miracles that leave behind them no sensible proofs of their reality (δ). But the giving sight to a person born blind, or the restoration of a dead man to life, is a permanent effect produced by supernatural means. This cannot be resolved into false perception; and of this kind are by far the greater part of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, he returned to his home, where we find him some time afterwards sitting at table with Jesus; visited by great multitudes of the Jews as an object of curiosity; and giving the Jewish rulers, by his presence, so much uneasiness, that they assembled to plot his destruction[a]. The blind man at Jerusalem, whose restoration to sight is recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, was forthcoming to satisfy the scrutiny and to sustain the browbeating of Christ's angry and powerful enemies. The cripple at the gate of the temple, who was suddenly cured by St. Peter[b], boldly produced himself along with the apostles, when they were brought the next day before the Jewish council[c].—There are other cases of a *mixed* nature, (ε) in which, although the principal miracle is momentary, some circumstances combined with it are permanent (ε). Of this kind is St. Paul's conversion[d]. The vision and the voice were momentary; but Paul's blindness for three days in consequence of what had happened, the vision which directed Ananias to Paul, his finding him accordingly in the condition described, and Paul's recovery of his sight upon Ananias laying his hands upon him; are circumstances which take the transaction, and the principal miracle as included in it, entirely out of the case of momen-

[a] John xii. 1, 2, 9, 10. [b] Acts iii. 2. [c] Ib. iv. 14. [d] Ib. ix.

tary miracles, or of such as may be resolved into false perceptions. Exactly the same thing may be observed of St. Peter's vision[a] preparatory to the call of Cornelius, and of its connexion with what was imparted in a distant place to Cornelius himself, and with the message despatched by Cornelius to Peter. The message could not be a delusion, nor could the concurrence of the two visions have happened without a supernatural cause.

Beside the risk of delusion which attaches upon momentary miracles, there is also much more room *for imposture;* (ζ) because the account cannot be examined at the moment. This was the case with the alleged appearance of Castor and Pollux in the battle fought by Posthumius with the Latins at the lake Regillus. Posthumius doubtless spread the report after the battle, when no one could positively say what was, and what was not seen by some or other of the army, in the dismay and amidst the tumult of the engagement (ζ).

The discussion of claims to inspiration, illuminations, secret notices or directions, internal sensations, or consciousness of being acted upon by spiritual influences, may be omitted, (η) because these appeal to no external proof (η) (11).

II. (12) It is not necessary to bring into the comparison *tentative* miracles, that is, trials that succeed out of a great number that fail. This observation bears with considerable force upon the ancient oracles and auguries, in which a single coincidence of the event with the prediction is talked of and magnified, whilst failures are forgotten or suppressed or accounted for. It is also applicable to the cures wrought by relics, and at the tombs of saints, and by the king's touch. There was nothing tentative, nothing accidental, in the cures recorded in the Gospel. Christ did not profess to heal all that were sick; indeed, he gave the Jews to understand[b] that it was not necessary for the purpose of a divine interposition, that it should be general.

[a] *Acts x.* [b] See Luke iv. 25.

But he never attempted a cure in vain [a]. A paralytic is let down in his bed at Jesus's feet, in the midst of a surrounding multitude—Jesus bids him walk, and he does so[b]. A man with a withered hand is in the synagogue—Jesus bids him stretch forth his hand in the presence of the assembly, and it is "restored whole like the other[c]." It may be observed also, that many of Christ's miracles—such as his giving sight to a person born blind, raising the dead, walking upon the sea, feeding a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes—are of nature which does not admit of the supposition of a fortunate experiment (12).

III. We may dismiss from the question all accounts in which, allowing the phenomenon to be real, the fact to be true, it still remains *doubtful* whether *a miracle* was wrought. (13) This is the case with the ancient history of what is called the "thundering legion;" the extraordinary circumstances which obstructed the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem by Julian; the circling of the flames and fragrant smell at the martyrdom of Polycarp; the sudden shower that extinguished the fire into which the Scriptures were thrown in the Dioclesian persecution; Constantine's dream, and his inscribing the cross upon his standard and the shields of his soldiers in consequence of it; his victory, and the escape of the standard-bearer. This distinction also applies to the narratives which relate the supernatual cure of nervous complaints, and diseases much affected by imagination (13).

IV. Nearly to the same head of objection may be referred stories which may be resolved into *exaggeration.*

[a] A solitary instance, ingenuously related by three of the Evangelists*, in which the *disciples* of Christ attempted a cure in vain, seems to have been intended to display the superiority of Christ, who afterwards healed the patient, above all who performed miracles in his name—a distinction which, during his presence in the world, it might have been necessary to inculcate by some such proof as this.

[b] Mark ii. 3. Matt. xii. 10.

* Matt. xvii. 14; Mark ix. 14; Luke ix. 38.

(14) The miracles of the Gospel cannot possibly be explained away in this manner. The feeding of five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, or the raising of Lazarus, come not within the compass of misrepresentation; for no natural circumstances, however extraordinary, could supply a foundation for accounts of miracles like these (14).

(15) Though there may be miracles of the New Testament which fall within some or other of the exceptions to miraculous accounts before mentioned, yet there are a variety of others to which none of such exceptions extend; and these support the credibility of such as might appear doubful, if regarded by themselves. Thus the visions and revelations of St. Paul derive their credibility from the external miracles he wrought. And though the transfiguration and some other miracles were *momentary*, few who admit the rest, which are free from this and the other objections, will reject *them*. The miracles of Christ were numerous and of various kinds. They were also performed in great varieties of situation, form, and manner; in cities and in villages, in synagogues and in private houses, in the street and in the highways; with preparation, as in the case of Lazarus, and by accident, as in the case of the widow's son at Nain; when attended by multitudes, and when alone with the patient; in the midst of his disciples, and in the presence of enemies (15).

(16) When we remove from the comparison the cases fairly disposed of by the observations that have been stated, many cases will not remain. To those which do remain, we apply this final distinction: That there is *not* satisfactory evidence that persons pretending to be original witnesses of the miracles, voluntarily passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts (16).

CHAPTER II.

THE three following are the instances with which Mr. Hume has chosen to confront the miracles of the New Testament; and (1) which, therefore, we are entitled to regard as the strongest which the history of the world could supply to the inquiries of a very acute and learned adversary (1).

I. (2) The cure of a blind and of a lame man at Alexandria, by the Emperor Vespasian, as related by Tacitus[a]. Now Tacitus wrote from report, at Rome, of what passed at Alexandria twenty-seven years before; and he does not appear to have examined or believed the story The affair, indeed, was most probably an imposture concerted between the patients, the physicians, and the Emperor. There was everything to facilitate such a scheme. The miracle was calculated to confer honour upon the Emperor, and upon the god Serapis, who, it was said, had admonished the patients to go to him. It was achieved at the instance and in the midst of the Emperor's flatterers and followers, in a city previously devoted to his interest, and to the worship of the god. In the first of the patients, the organs of vision were not destroyed; and the weakness of the second was in his joints; exactly cases in which no external marks of the diseases exist, and which, consequently, are capable of being easily counterfeited. The strongest circumstance in Tacitus's narration is, that the first patient was "*notus* tabe oculorum," remarked or notorious for the disease in his eyes. But this might have found its way into the story in its progress from a distant country, and during an interval of thirty years; or it might be true the malady of the eyes was notorious, yet that the nature and degree of the disease had never been ascertained—a case by no means uncommon. The observation of Tacitus, that they who were present continued even then to relate the story, when there was nothing to be gained by the lie, only proves that those who had told the lie for many years, still persisted in it (2).

[a] *See a translation of the passage in Tacitus, in Paley's Evidences.*

II. The restoration of the leg of an attendant of the Church of Saragossa in Spain, noticed by Cardinal de Retz, is the second example. The story is this: (3) "In the Church of Saragossa in Spain," says the Cardinal, "the canons showed me a man whose business it was to light the lamps; telling me that he had been several years at the gate with one leg only. I saw him with two."—Mr. Hume states that the Cardinal did not believe the story; at all events he does not appear to have made any inquiry about it. An artificial leg would be sufficient, in a place where no such contrivance had ever before been heard of, to give origin and currency to a story which coincided not less with the wishes and preconceptions of the people, than with the interests of their ecclesiastical rulers, the honor of whose image and church was thereby advanced (3).

III. The miracles said to have been performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, form the third example. Now (4) some of the cures however appear scarcely distinguishable from the ordinary progress of natural recoveries, and the rest may fairly be accounted for by supposing that the patients who frequented the tomb were so affected by their devotion, their expectation, the place, the solemnity, and, above all, by the sympathy of the surrounding multitude, that many of them were thrown into violent convulsions, which, in certain instances, produced a removal of disorders depending upon obstruction. Similar effects have been experienced in the operation of animal magnetism.

Circumstances which indicate this explication in the case of the Parisian miracles, are the following:

1. They were tentative. Out of many thousand sick, infirm, and diseased persons, the professed history of the miracles relates only nine cures.

2. The convulsions at the tomb are admitted.

3. The diseases were mostly of that sort which depends upon inaction and obstruction, as dropsies, palsies, and some tumours.

4. The cures were gradual; some patients attending *many days, some* several weeks, and some several months.

5. Many of the cures were incomplete.

6. Others were temporary.

There is one circumstance, however, in favour of these miracles; they were alleged by the Jansenists against the Jesuits, and were therefore opposed and examined by the latter. But the consequence of this was, that many falsehoods were detected; and if there were some cases which could not be accounted for, it was because the efficacy of strong spasmodic affections was not then sufficiently known. And it should be observed, that the cause of Jansenism did not rise by the miracles, but sunk (4).

(5) These, it should be remembered, are the strongest examples which the history of the world supplies. In none of them was the miracle *unequivocal;* by none of them were established prejudices and persuasions overthrown; of none of them did the credit make its way in opposition to authority and power; by none of them were many induced to commit themselves, even in contradiction to prior opinions, to a life of mortification, danger, and sufferings; none were called upon to attest them at the expense of their fortunes, their liberty, and their lives (5).

PART II.

OF THE AUXILIARY EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

Prophecy.

(1) THE remarkable words contained in Isaiah LII. 13—15, LIII., are attributed to a person who lived seven centuries before the Christian æra (1). (2) That they were written before the fact to which they are applied took place, or could by any natural means be foreseen, is incontestable. (α) They occur in a writing that comes out of the custody of our adversaries the Jews, by whom the authenticity of the prediction has never been questioned (α). And the passage derives additional force from these circumstances: (β) first, that it is not extracted from an historical or devotional composition, and merely presumed to have been oracular, because it turns out to be applicable to some future events, but is taken from a writing declaredly prophetic of such future transactions and changes as were connected with the Jewish nation; and secondly, that it is intermixed with no other subject (β).

The application of the prophecy to the evangelic history is plain and appropriate. A different construing of the original, or varieties of reading, produce no material alteration in its sense: but so far as they differ in meaning from the common translation, Bishop Lowth's corrections, which are the faithful result of an accurate examination, bring the description nearer to the New Testament history[a]. (δ) Although there is good proof that the ancient Rab-

[a] *Authorized version.*
We did esteem him stricken.

He was taken from prison and from judgment.

Bp. Lowth's version.
We did esteem him judicially stricken.

By an oppressive judgment he was taken off.

bins explained it of their expected Messiah; their modern expositors represent it as a description of the calamitous state and intended restoration of the Jewish people, who are here, they say, exhibited under the character of a single person. But this exposition appears to labor under insuperable difficulties: in particular, it is difficult to discover, if the Jewish people be the sufferer, in whose name or person the prophet speaks, when he says, "He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet *we* did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; but he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bound for *our* iniquities, the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him, and with his stripes *we* are healed." And the following passage which expressly represents the sufferings as voluntary, and the sufferer as interceding for the offenders, is totally inapplicable to the fortunes of a nation: "because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (δ)(2)."

There are other prophecies of the Old Testament, interpreted by Christians to relate to Jesus; and indeed there is no other eminent person to whom so many circumstances apply[a].

II. (4) A second head of argument from prophecy is founded upon our Lord's predictions concerning the de-

Who shall declare his generation?	His manner of life who would declare? (*i. e.* who would stand forth in his defence.)
And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.*	And his grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb.
By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.	By the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many (γ).

[a] (3) "That the advent of Christ and the consequences of it, should not have been more distinctly revealed in the Jewish sacred books, is in some measure accounted for by the consideration, that for the Jews to have foreseen the fall of their institution, and that it was to merge at length into a more perfect and comprehensive dispensation, would have cooled too much, and relaxed, their zeal for it, and their adherence to it; upon which zeal and adherence, the preservation in the world of any remains of religious truth, might in a great measure depend."(3)—Pal. Evid. Conclusion.

* This inverts the order of events.

struction of Jerusalem, recorded by three out of the four evangelists[a]. The general agreement of the description with the event, viz., the ruin of the Jewish nation, and the capture of Jerusalem under Vespasian, thirty-six years after Christ's death, is most evident; and the accordancy in various details, has been shewn by many learned writers (4). (5) The only question appears to be, whether the words were really delivered *before* the event. Now

1. The judgment of antiquity concurs in assigning to the three Gospels a date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

2. The evangelists must have been far advanced in life when Jerusalem was taken; and no reason has been given why they should so long defer writing their histories.

3. The evangelists have neither inserted any words to create a belief that their accounts were written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, which a *sophist*, writing *after* that event, would have done; nor have they dropped a hint of the completion of the prophecies recorded by them, which *undesigning* persons, such as they were, writing *after* that event, could hardly have failed to do; in like manner as St. Luke, after relating the denunciation of a dearth by Agabus, adds—"which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar[b]."

4. The admonitions[c] which Christ is represented to have given to his followers to save themselves by flight, are not easily accounted for, supposing the prophecy to have been fabricated after the event. If the Christians, when the siege approached, did make their escape from Jerusalem, they must have had the prophecy amongst them: if, at the time of the siege, they had no knowledge, or did not take notice, of any such warning, it is very improbable that a writer, near to that time, would state to Jews and Jewish converts, that the followers of Christ had received admonitions of which they made no use.

5. If the prophecies had been composed after the event, it is probable there would have been more specifica-

[a] *See Luke xxi. 5—25;* xix. 41—44. Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii.
[b] *Acts xi. 28.* [c] Luke xxi. 20, 21; Matt. xxiv. 15—18.

tion. The names or descriptions of the enemy, the general, the emperor, would have been found in them; and the designation of the time would have been more determinate (5).

The present argument is not affected by the objection, that the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is mixed or connected by the evangelists with expressions relating to the last judgment, so as to lead an ordinary reader to imagine that these two events would not be far distant from each other. If our Saviour actually foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, it is sufficient.

CHAPTER II.

The Morality of the Gospel.

IN stating the morality of the Gospel as an argument of its truth, the two following points are to be admitted:

(1) First, the teaching of morality was not the primary design of the mission. For, since men can judge tolerably how to act, the (α) scope of Christianity, as a *revelation*, was to influence the conduct of human life, by establishing the proof of a future state of reward or punishment; and its direct object, therefore, is to supply mankind with *strength of motive*, sufficient to bear them up against the force of passion, and the temptation of present advantage (α).

Secondly, morality cannot, properly speaking, be a subject of discovery. (β) The qualities of actions depend entirely upon their effects[a]; which effects must all along have been the subject of human experience (β). In morality, therefore, there cannot be any thing similar to the discoveries in natural philosophy and some other branches of human knowledge (1).

(2) The morality of the Gospel, considering from whom it came, is most extraordinary, and such as, supposing the

[a] Those who object to this assertion, may substitute the following without affecting the argument: *The quality of any given class of actions is ascertainable from the effects of such actions*; which effects, &c.—J. W. S.

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religion to be false, it is difficult to account for; or, to place the argument a little lower in the scale, it is a morality which completely repels the supposition of its being the tradition of a barbarous age or people, of the religion being founded in folly, or of its being the production of craft; and it repels also, in a great degree, the supposition of its having been the effusion of an enthusiastic mind (2).

The subject may be treated of with respect to, first, THE THINGS TAUGHT BY CHRIST; secondly, THE MANNER OF HIS TEACHING; thirdly, HIS DISCOURSES CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR *negative* CHARACTER, that is, WITH REFERENCE TO WHAT THEY DID *not* CONTAIN; and fourthly, SOME TOPICS OF A MORE DIFFUSE NATURE.

I. (3) Under the first head, the author of *The Internal Evidence of Christianity* appears to have satisfactorily made out the two following positions; namely,

1. (γ) That the Gospel omits some qualities which have usually engaged the praises and admiration of mankind, but which, in reality and in their general effects, have been prejudicial to human happiness.

2. That the Gospel has brought forward some virtues which possess the highest intrinsic value, but which have commonly been overlooked and contemned (γ).

(δ) The first of these propositions, he exemplifies in the instances of friendship, patriotism, active courage; in the sense in which these qualities are usually understood, and in the conduct which they often produce: the second, in the instances of passive courage or endurance of sufferings, patience under affronts and injuries, humility, irresistance, placability (δ).

(ϵ) Nothing indeed can be more different than the Heroic and the Christian character. The one possesses vigour, firmness, resolution; is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, jealous of its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentments. The *other is meek,* yielding, complying, forgiving, not prompt *to act, but willing* to suffer, silent and gentle under rude-

ness and insult, suing for reconciliation where others would demand satisfaction, giving way to the pushes of impudence, conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrong-headedness, the intractability of those with whom it has to deal (ε).

The former of these characters is, and ever has been, the favourite of the world; while the latter is the subject of the commendation, the precepts, the example, of Christ[a].

Now in contradiction to first impressions, to popular opinions, to the encomiums of orators and poets, and even to historians and moralists, the author above referred to has most clearly proved the superiority of the latter character. (η) He shews, First, that if this disposition were universal, the world would be a society of friends; whereas if the other disposition were universal, it would produce a scene of universal contention: Secondly, that in whatever degree this disposition does prevail, in the same proportion it prevents, allays, and terminates contentions. Without it, enmities must not only be frequent, but eternal; for, each retaliation requiring a fresh *satisfaction*, no period can be assigned to the reciprocation of injuries and to the progress of hatred, but that which closes the lives, or at least the intercourse of the parties (η).

Although the former of the two characters may be occasionally useful, yet (θ) this is nothing more than what is true of many qualities acknowledged to be vicious. *Envy*, for instance, is a very strong stimulus to exertion, but nevertheless, being generally noxious, it is justly condemned (θ).

The preference of the patient to the heroic character, is a peculiarity of the Christian institution which is here proposed as an argument of wisdom very much beyond a person in the situation of the Founder of Christianity (ι).

II. (4) Our Saviour has laid especial stress upon the regulation of the *thoughts*. This argument, which relates to the voluptuous passions, and the last, respecting the

[a] (ζ) See, for instance, Matt. v. 39, 40, 41, 44, and xxiii. 6 (ζ).

malicious passions, together make up the whole character. It is particularly exemplified in that strong expression, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart[a]." Christ makes the controul of thought essential. And this is the only discipline that can succeed; for a moral system that prohibits actions but not thoughts, is ineffectual (4).

III. (5) Our Saviour has laid down a general principle of conduct, and a short rule of life, which would have been deemed worthy of the most applauded philosopher of the most enlightened age of the world. "Then one of them which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets[b]." The first of these precepts suggests the only motive which acts steadily and uniformly on all occasions. The second corrects *selfishness*, which of all the tendencies in the human character, stands most in need of correction. He who obeys this commandment, will always be *considerate*, not only of the rights, but also of the feelings, bodily and mental, of his fellow men.

(κ) That these precepts are extant in the Mosaic code, does not detract much from the merit of our Lord's answer; for he it was that selected them out of that voluminous institution as the sum of all others, and proposed them to his hearers as their rule and principle (κ).

And what our Saviour had said upon the subject of love or charity, appears to have *fixed* the sentiment among his followers[c] (5).

IV. (6) Our Lord excluded all regard to fame and reputation, as a motive to good deeds.

[a] *Matt. v. 28.* See also Ib. xv. 19; xxiii. 25, 27, 28.
[b] *Matt. xxii 35—40; xix. 16.* Luke x. 27. [c] See Paley's Evidences.

(λ) "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven[a]." "When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly[b]." And the rule, by parity of reason, is extended to all other virtues (λ).

(μ) It is not publicity, but ostentation, which is prohibited; not the mode, but the motive of the action, which is regulated. Publication or concealment may be the *mode*, according as the end to be promoted by it appears to require. But from the *motive*, the reputation of the deed, and the advantage of that reputation to ourselves, must be excluded; for, in whatever degree they are not, in that proportion the action fails of being virtuous (μ). The authority of public opinion, and especially the opinion of good men, the satisfaction of being well received and well thought of, the benefit of being known or distinguished; are topics of persuasion to which *we* are fain to have recourse; but the true virtue is that which Jesus taught, that which, entirely discarding these considerations, retires to the single internal purpose of pleasing God (6).

Next to what our Saviour taught, THE MANNER OF HIS TEACHING may be considered. (7) This was extremely peculiar, but it was suitable to his *character*, as one who declared himself to be a messenger from God. He put the truth of what he said upon authority[c]. The immediate aim, therefore, of his teaching was *impression;* because conviction was to arise from respect to his person and authority. Now, for the purpose of *impression*, nothing could have been better adapted than the short emphatic rules, occasional reflections and maxims, in which his instructions were conceived. In this view, surely nothing could have been said better than, "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you." "The first and great commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:

[a] Matt. vi. 1. [b] Ib. vi. 6

[c] *I say unto you*, Swear not at all; I say unto you, Resist not evil; I say unto you, Love your enemies. (Matt. v. 34, 39, 44.)

and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Again, the brevity of our Lord's instructions was peculiarly suited to his *situation*. Compared with his work, his ministry lasted only three years; and yet within this period, he had many places to visit, many audiences to address; he was besieged by crowds of followers, persecuted by numerous enemies[a] (7).

(9) It is incidental to this mode of moral instruction, which proceeds not by proof, but upon authority, not by disquisition but by precept, that the rules will be conceived in absolute terms, leaving the application and the distinctions that attend it, to the reason of the hearer (9). (10) It is likewise to be remarked that many of those strong instances in our Lord's sermon, such as, "If any man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also"—"If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"—"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain"—though they appear as specific precepts, are intended as descriptive of disposition and character. A specific compliance with the precepts would be useless, or worse than useless; but the disposition they inculcate is of the highest value (10). This disposition may be unattainable, but (11) so is all perfection; and yet no one would maintain, that, on that account a moralist ought to recommend imperfections (11). One excellency, however, of our Saviour's rules, is, that they are either never mistaken, or never so mistaken as to do harm. And (12) they were only designed to regulate personal conduct from personal motives, and not to affect what is necessary to be done for the sake of the public[b] (12).

[a] (8) In particular his sermon upon the mount ought always to be considered with a view to these observations. The question is not, Whether a fuller, a more accurate, a more systematic, or a more argumentative discourse upon morals might not have been pronounced; but, Whether more could have been said in the same room, better adapted to the exigencies of the hearers, or better calculated for the purpose of impression (8).

[b] (13) Some appear to require, in a revelation, minute directions for every *case that may occur*. But, how prolix, and yet how incomplete and unavailing *an attempt to give these* must have been, is proved by the example of the *Mussulman Code*, which contains not less than seventy-five thousand precepts *(13)*.

(14) Many of the *Parables* of the New Testament are such as would have done honor to any book in the world; in the choice of the subjects; in the structure of the narratives; in the aptness, propriety, and the force of the circumstances woven into them; and in some (as that of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and the Publican) in an union of pathos and simplicity, which, in the best productions of human genius, is the fruit only of a much-exercised and well-educated judgment. *The Lord's Prayer*, for a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention upon a few great points, for suitableness to every condition, for sufficiency, for conciseness without obscurity, for the weight and real importance of its petitions, is without an equal. Now whence did these come? Was our Saviour in fact a well-instructed philosopher, while he is represented to us as an illiterate peasant? Or shall we say that some Christians of taste and education of the first century, composed these pieces and ascribed them to Christ? Besides all other incredibilities in this account, judging from their remaining writings, we may conclude that they *could not* do it. And the whole collection of the Talmud is one continued proof how little the Jews, the countrymen and companions of Christ, were capable of assisting him in furnishing out such lessons as he delivered (14).

We come now to consider our Lord's discourses WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR *negative* CHARACTER, that is, WITH REFERENCE TO WHAT THEY DID *not* CONTAIN.

(15) I. They exhibit no particular description of the invisible world. The future happiness of the good and the misery of the bad, which is all we need to be assured of, is positively affirmed, and is represented by metaphors and comparisons which were plainly intended merely as metaphors and comparisons. As to the rest, a solemn reserve is maintained[a]. This repels the suspicion of enthusiasm; for enthusiasm is wont, with wild particularity, to expatiate upon the condition of the departed, above all other subjects.

[a] See for instance Luke xx. 27—38.

And as this is a topic always listened to with greediness, the teacher, whose principal purpose is to draw upon himself attention, is sure to be full of it. Half the Koran relates to this.

II. Our Lord neither enjoined nor recommended austerities.

III. His devotion was never impassioned. The Lord's Prayer is a model of calm devotion. His words in the garden are unaffected expressions of a deep, indeed, but sober piety. He does not appear to have been ever worked up into any thing that may be termed enthusiasm.

IV. It is very usual with the human mind to substitute forwardness and fervency in a particular cause, for the merit of general and regular morality; and it is natural and politic also, in the leader of a sect or party, to encourage such a disposition in his followers. Christ, however, noticed this turn of thought only to condemn it[a]. This was a proof both of his sincerity and of his judgment.

V. He did not fall in with any of the depraved fashions of his country, or with the natural bias of his own education. Bred up a Jew, under a religion extremely technical, and amongst a people more tenacious of the ceremonies than of any other part of that religion, though he did not enthusiastically condemn all external ordinances, he delivered an institution containing a ritual less extensive and more simple than is to be found in any other. Both in the treatment of the national religion, and in the formation of his own institution, he displayed the soundness and moderation of his judgment. He declared that the Sabbath was to be subordinate to its purpose, and that that purpose was the real good of those who were the subjects of the law[b]; and he assigned to each class of duties its proper station in the scale of moral importance[c]. All this shews that Jesus was something more than an illiterate Jew; certainly not an impetuous enthusiast.

VI. Nothing could be more quibbling than were the comments and expositions of the Jewish doctors in the time of Christ; nothing so puerile as their distinctions.

[a] *See Matt. vii. 21, 22.* [b] See Mark ii. 27. [c] See Luke xi. 42.

Their evasion of the fifth commandment, and their exposition of the law of oaths, are specimens of the bad taste in morals which then prevailed. Whereas in a numerous collection of our Saviour's apophthegms, many of them referring to sundry precepts of the Jewish law, there is not to be found one example of sophistry or false subtlety, or of any thing approaching thereto.

VII. The national temper of the Jews was intolerant, narrow-minded, and excluding. In Jesus, on the contrary, whether we regard his lessons or his example, we see benevolence the most enlarged and comprehensive[a].

VIII. Lastly, Christianity was completely abstracted from all views either of ecclesiastical or civil policy. Christ's sentiments on this head may be gathered from his declaration that "his kingdom was not of this world;" his evasion of the question, whether it was or was not lawful to give tribute to Cæsar; his reply to an application that was made to him to interpose in a question of property, "Man, who made me a ruler or a judge over you?" his declining to exercise the office of a criminal judge, in the case of the woman taken in adultery. Moreover, Christianity declines all questions upon government: but yet to every form it is alike applicable and useful (15), inasmuch as, (16) first, it tends to make men virtuous; secondly, it states obedience to government, in ordinary cases, to be a duty of conscience; thirdly, it induces dispositions favourable to tranquillity; fourthly, it inculcates prayer for communities and their governors, of whatever description they may be (16).

(17) Now, remembering that the teaching of morality was not the primary design of Christ's mission, and that morality cannot be a subject of discovery, when we consider his preference of solid to popular virtues, of a character commonly despised to a character universally extolled; his regulation of the thoughts; his collecting human duty into

[a] In the parable of the good Samaritan, (Luke x. 30), the very point of the story is, that the person relieved by him was his national and religious enemy. —*See also Matt. viii. 11*; Luke ix. 53—56.

two well-devised rules; his exclusion of all regard to reputation, as a motive to good deeds; his instructing in a manner exactly suited to his character and situation, and the great beauty and excellency of the Parables and form of Prayer that he delivered; his silence respecting the particulars of a future state; his enjoining no austerities; his unimpassioned devotion; his sincerity and judgment in not substituting fervency and forwardness in his cause for general and regular morality; his not falling in with the depraved fashions of his country, or with the natural bias of his own education, yet not decrying positive distinctions and external observances; his freedom from the sophistry and frivolous subtilties for which the Jewish teachers were remarkable; his unnational liberality and benevolence; and the absence in his religion of all views of civil or ecclesiastical policy; in fine, when we consider either what he taught or what he did not teach, either the substance or the manner of his teaching; when we compare Christianity as it came from its Author, either with other religions, or with itself in other hands; we must acknowledge that some regard is due to the testimony of those to whom it owes its first establishment, when they declare their knowledge that the religion proceeded from God, and when they appeal to miracles which they wrought or witnessed, in proof of the truth of their assertion.

Perhaps the qualities observable in the religion may be thought to prove something more. They would have been extraordinary, had the religion come from any person: from the Person from whom it did come, they are exceedingly so. What was Jesus in external appearance?—a carpenter's son, living in a remote province of Palestine until the time he produced himself in his public character. Uninstructed, except in the works of Moses and the Prophets, he had received nothing to form in him a taste or judgment different from that of his countrymen and of persons in the same rank of life with himself. And who were his apostles?—a few fishermen upon the lake of Tiberias; persons just as uneducated, and, for the purpose of framing rules of morality, as unpromising as himself. Sup-

pose the mission to be real, all this is accounted for; the unsuitableness of the authors to the production, of the characters to the undertaking, no longer surprises us: but without reality, it is very difficult to explain how such a system could proceed from such persons (17).

SOME TOPICS OF A MORE DIFFUSE NATURE remain to be noticed.

(18) Respecting *the character of our Saviour*, which is a part of the morality of the Gospel, there is one strong observation, which is as old as Origen; namely, that Christ has never been charged with any personal vice. Not a reflection upon his moral character appears for five hundred years after his birth; whereas some stain pollutes the morals or the morality of almost every other teacher and of every other lawgiver[a].

Though the Gospels are very short, and are confined to narrative, they incidentally discover devotion, humility, benignity, mildness, patience, prudence[a].

Our Saviour's lessons touch, and oftentimes by very affecting representations, upon some of the most interesting topics of human duty and meditation[a].

Other parts of the New Testament contain some of the best and shortest rules of life, or, which is the same thing, descriptions of virtue, that have ever been delivered[a].

Just and accurate enumerations of virtues and vices are given by St. Paul to his converts[b].

The relative duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants, of Christian teachers and their flocks, of governors and their subjects, are briefly set forth by the same writer[c] with truth and authority.

Lastly, the whole volume of the New Testament is replete with *piety*, with *devotional virtues* which were almost unknown to the heathen moralists; such as the most profound veneration of the Deity; an habitual sense of his bounty and protection; a firm confidence in the final result of his counsels and dispensations; a disposition to resort

[a] See instances mentioned by Dr. Paley. [b] Gal. v. 19; Col. iii. 12; 1 Cor. xiii.
[c] *Ephes.* v. 33, vi. 1—9; 2 Cor. vi. 6, 7; Rom. xiii.

upon all occasions to his mercy, for the supply of human wants, for assistance in danger, for relief from pain, for the pardon of sin (18).

CHAPTER III.

The Candor of the Writers of the New Testament.

(1) THIS candor may be said to consist in their noticing many circumstances which no writer would have forged, and which no writer would have noticed who had been careful to present the story in the most unexceptionable form (1). Gibbon has argued for the genuineness of the Koran from the confessions it contains to the apparent disadvantage of the Mahometan cause. The same defence vindicates the genuineness of the Gospels, and without any prejudice to the cause of Christianity.

(2) All the evangelists lead us to conclude that our Saviour, after he was risen, appeared only to his disciples, though they must have perceived that their narrative would have been much more specious and unobjectionable, had they related that Jesus appeared to his foes as well as his friends, or had they asserted his public appearance in general terms, without noticing the persons who witnessed the same.

John the Baptist's message stating his doubts concerning the character of Christ, must have afforded a handle to cavil and objections.

John vi. 66. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

Matthew xiii. 58. "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

Matthew v. 17. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," &c. This was written in contradiction to the apparent and then supposed tendency of Christ's mission.

Acts xxv. 18, 19. "They brought none accusation *against him of* such things as I supposed, but had certain

questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Nothing could be more in character with a Roman governor than these words; but a dishonest narrator would not have made a great man represent his cause in terms of so much disparagement and unconcern. The same observation may be repeated of the speech ascribed to Gallio (Acts xviii. 15): "If it be a question of words and names and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters."

Acts xxviii. 24. St. Paul, on his first arrival at Rome, preached to the Jews from morning until evening. "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not [2]."

The following appear to be passages which were very unlikely to have presented themselves to the mind of a forger or a fabulist.

[3] Matthew xxi. 21. "If ye have faith, and doubt not," "and ye say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done: all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, it shall be done." The term "faith," as here used, is perhaps rightly interpreted of confidence in that internal notice by which the apostles were admonished of their power to perform any particular miracle. But these words, in their obvious construction, carry with them a difficulty which no writer would have officiously introduced.

Luke ix. 59. "And he said unto another, Follow me: but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." This answer, though very expressive of the transcendant importance of religious concerns, was apparently harsh and repulsive, and is such as would not have been made for Christ.

The following passage also could not have been the production of a cold forgery: "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council, but

whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." Matt. v. 22.

No one would have forged such an answer as that given by our Lord, after his resurrection, to Mary Magdalene: "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father." John xx. 16, 17.

John vi. 51. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This passage, as well as the whole of the conversation of which it is a part, labors under an obscurity in which no one who made speeches for the persons of his narrative, would have involved them.

Christ's placing a young child in the midst of his contentious disciples, (Matt. xviii. 2), was by no means an obvious thought (3).

(4) If the account of the institution of the Eucharist had been fabricated, it would have had some thing of the particularity and formality which characterises the pretended apostolical constitutions: and, in the next place, we should not have met with the expression, "This is my body," the conciseness of which gives rise to a difficulty that has only been explained by a diligent comparison of those words with forms of expression used in Scripture on other occasions (4).

Now it ought to be observed, that these examples support both the authenticity and the truth of the historical Scriptures. (5) Dr. Lardner observes that "Christians are induced to believe the writers of the Gospel, by observing the evidences of piety and probity that appear in their writings, in which there is no deceit or artifice or cunning or design." "No remarks," says Dr. Beattie, "are thrown in to anticipate objections, nothing of that caution which never fails to distinguish the testimony of those who are conscious of imposture, no endeavour to reconcile the reader's mind to what may be extraordinary in the narrative." "It doth *not appear,*" observes Duchal, "that ever it came into the

mind of these writers to consider how this or that action would appear to mankind, or what objections might be raised upon them." They tell the truth, and attend to nothing else. Surely this looks like sincerity(5).

It may not be improper in this place to observe the extreme *naturalness* of some of the things related in the New Testament.

(6) Mark ix. 23. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." This struggle in the father's heart between solicitude for the preservation of his child, and a kind of involuntary distrust of Christ's power to heal him, is here expressed with an air of reality which could hardly be counterfeited.

Matt. xxi. 9. The eagerness of the people to introduce Christ into Jerusalem, and their demand shortly afterwards of his crucifixion, is an exact representation of popular favor.

It was natural that the rulers and Pharisees should reject Christ, while many of the common people received him. And the reason with which they who rejected Christ's mission, kept themselves in countenance and answered the arguments of those who favored it, is precisely the reason such men usually give: "Have any of the scribes or Pharisees believed on him?" (John vii. 48.)

John iv. 29. The exaggeration of the Samaritan woman: "Come see a man which told me *all things* that ever I did," is very natural, especially in the hurried state of spirits into which she may be supposed to have been thrown.

Luke x. 29. The subtilty of the lawyer or Jewish divine in running a distinction upon the word neighbour, in the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is extremely natural.

The behaviour of Gallio (Acts xviii. 12—17.) and of Festus, (xxv. 18, 19.) have been noticed already.

St. Paul's zeal, first against, and then for Christianity, is a natural consistency of character (6).

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(7) There are also some *properties*, as they may be called, in the Gospels; that is, circumstances corresponding with, or arising from, the alleged situation, character, and intention of their respective authors.

St. Matthew, who was an inhabitant of Galilee and did not join Christ's society until some time after our Lord had come into Galilee to preach, has given us very little of his history prior to that period. St. John, who had been converted sooner, relates some remarkable particulars which had taken place before Christ left Judea to go into Galilee.

St. Matthew, who wrote for Jewish readers, has recorded, (xv. 1.) without comment, the cavil of the Pharisees against the disciples of Jesus for eating with "unclean hands;" but St. Mark, intending his narrative for a general circulation, after recording (vii. 1.) the same circumstance, explains it by stating the Jewish custom of ablution (7).

CHAPTER IV.

Identity of Christ's Character.

THE argument expressed by this title principally applies to the comparison of the first three Gospels with that of St. John, (1) which, according to the ancient account, was written to supply the omissions in the others; of which omissions the principal were, our Saviour's conferences with the Jews of Jerusalem, and his discourses to the apostles at the last supper (1).

(2) I. Although the actions and discourses ascribed to Christ by St. John, are very different in general from those *recorded* by the other evangelists; yet (*a*) there is a *similitude of manner*, which, as it cannot be supposed that such

men as the evangelists *studied* uniformity of character, or indeed ever thought of any such thing, indicates that the actions and discourses proceeded from the same real person (*a*).

This similitude of manner is most perceptible in our Saviour's raising reflections from the objects and incidents before him, or turning a particular discourse into an opportunity of general instruction.

(*β*) Matt. xii. 47—50. When informed that his mother and brethren desired to speak to him, he said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?...whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Matt. xvi. 5. "And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven (*i. e.* the doctrine) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Matt. xv. 1. The Scribes and Pharisees having cavilled against the disciples for eating with unwashen hands, he afterwards took occasion to say to the multitude: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man;" adding with the view of explaining these words to his disciples: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, &c., these are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands, defileth not a man."

Mark x. 13, 14, 15. When children were brought to him, he said:—"whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

Mark i. 16, 17. "Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers: and Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Luke xi. 27. "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked; but he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

Luke xiii. 1—3. "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices; and Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

Luke xiv. 15. "And when one of them that sat at meat with him, heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper and bade many," &c.—Observe also, in the same chapter, two other examples of advice drawn from the circumstances of the entertainment and the behaviour of the guests.

It will now be seen whether there is not a visible agreement of *manner* between the above series of examples and the following taken from St. John.

John vi. 26, 27. "Verily I say unto you, Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you."

John iv. 12. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him. shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

John iv. 33. "Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

John ix. 2—5. "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin—this man or his parents, that he was *born blind?* Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned,

nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

John ix. 39. When the man above mentioned, to whom Jesus had given sight, was cast out by the Pharisees, Jesus said unto him, "For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind (β)."

(γ) Besides these, there are numerous other instances, as well in St. John's Gospel as in the other three, wherein Christ most probably alluded to some object or some occasion then before him, though the mention of the occasion or the object is omitted.

Nothing of this *manner* is perceptible in the speeches recorded in the Acts, or in any other than those attributed to Christ: and it may be remarked that it would have been very difficult for any forger or fabulist to have invented both the incidents and the observations thereon; and far more natural for him to have fabricated discourses exhorting to virtue and dissuading from vice, in general terms (γ).

II. Between the history of Christ's placing a little child in the midst of his contentious disciples, as related by the first three evangelists[a], and the history of Christ's washing his disciples' feet, as given by St. John[b], there is an affinity in these two points: first, that both stories denote the emulation which prevailed amongst the disciples, and Christ's care and desire to correct it; and secondly, that both are specimens of the same peculiar manner of teaching, namely, by action.

III. The appellation of "the Son of man" occurs seventeen times in St. Matthew's Gospel, twenty in St. Mark's, twenty-one in St. Luke's, and eleven in St. John's; and always with this restriction, that it is only used by Christ himself.

[a] *Matt. xviii. 1;* Mark ix. 33; Luke ix. 46.

[b] Chap. xiii. 3.

IV. All the evangelists represent Christ as withdrawing himself whenever the behaviour of the multitude indicated a disposition to tumult[a].

V. Our Saviour's singular reserve, for some time and upon some occasions at least, in declaring himself to be the Messiah, appears in all the evangelists[b].

VI. The Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke afford instances[c] of the difficulty Christ's disciples found in understanding him, when he spoke to them of the future part of his history, especially of his passion and resurrection; their consequent wish for farther explanation; and their fear of giving offence by asking for it. And the same circumstance appears under other examples in St. John's Gospel[d].

VII. The meekness of Christ during his last sufferings, is conspicuous in the narratives of all the evangelists. We discern the same tranquillity, as well as the same reference to his public teaching, in his answer in St. John[e], when the high priest asked him of his disciples and his doctrine, as in his reply to the armed party who seized him, which we read of in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke[f]. His mild expostulation with Pilate on two occasions, as related by St. John[g], and the description of the last scene of his life by the other evangelists; his answer in St. John[h] to the officer who struck him, and his praying for his murderers, as recorded by St. Luke; all exhibit the same character. And his unwillingness to make any defence against his accusers, appears as well in St. John as in the other evangelists[i] (2).

[a] Compare Matt. xiv. 22 and Luke v. 15, 16, with John v. 13, vi. 15.
[b] See Matt. xvi. 20; Mark iii. 11; Luke iv. 41; John x. 24, 25.
[c] See Mark ix. 32; Luke ix. 45.
[d] John xvi. 16, *et seq.*
[e] Chap. xviii. 20, 21.
[f] Mark xiv. 48; Luke xxii. 52.
[g] Chap. xviii. 34; xix. 11.
[h] Chap xviii. 23.
[i] John xix. 9; Matt. xxvii. 14; Luke xxiii. 9.

(3) There are, moreover, two other correspondencies between St. John's history of Christ's passion and the narratives of the other evangelists, of a somewhat different kind to those above-mentioned.

First, all the evangelists except St. John represent Christ as praying "that the cup might pass from him." St. Matthew[a] adds these words, "*O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done.*" Now this, which is related to have been uttered in the garden immediately *before* he was apprehended, perfectly coincides with what is recorded by St. John[b]; namely, that when Jesus *was* seized and Peter attempted some resistance, he checked the attempt by saying, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, *the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" And this is a coincidence between histories which are extremely dissimilar.

Secondly, St. Matthew and St. Mark make the charge whereon our Lord was condemned, to be a threat of destroying the temple: "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands[c]." Now, in St. John's account of our Lord's first journey to Jerusalem, we are informed upon what circumstances this calumny was founded; for we are told that when the Jews said to him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" he answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up[d]." In this we observe an undesigned correspondency, which could hardly arise from any thing but the truth of the case (3).

(4) A strong and more general instance of agreement is the following:—The first three evangelists have related the appointment, and given a list of the twelve apostles[e]. St. John, without doing this, all along supposes Christ to be accompanied by a select party of disciples; these he refers to as twelve in number[f]; the persons he notices as of that

[a] Chap. xxvi. 42.
[b] Chap. xviii. 11.
[c] Mark xiv. 58.
[d] John ii. 19.
[e] *Matt. x. 1; Mark iii. 14;* Luke vi. 12.
[f] Chap. vi. 70, 71; xx. 24.

number, are included in the lists of the other evangelists; and the names principally occurring in his history are the names extant in their list [4].

All this bespeaks reality.

CHAPTER V.

Originality of our Saviour's Character.

THE Jews had understood their prophecies to foretell the advent of a person who should advance their nation to independence, and to a supreme degree of splendour and prosperity.

Had Jesus been an enthusiast, it is probable that his enthusiasm would have fallen in with the popular delusion; and that, while he gave himself out to be the person intended by these predictions, he would have assumed the character to which they were universally supposed to relate. Had he been an impostor, it was his business to have flattered the prevailing hopes, because these hopes were to be the instruments of his attraction and success.

But, setting aside conjectures, such *was* the conduct of all the pretended Messiahs. We learn from Josephus that there were many of these, and that, whether impostors or enthusiasts, they all produced themselves in the character which their countrymen looked for; that is to say, as the restorers and deliverers of the nation in a temporal point of view. Why Jesus, therefore, if he was either an enthusiast or an impostor, did not assume the same character as they did, it will be found difficult to explain.

CHAPTER VI.

Accordance of Scripture with foreign and independent accounts.

(1) THE conformity of the facts occasionally mentioned *or referred to* in Scripture with the state of things in the

times to which it relates, as represented by foreign and independent accounts, is an argument which has been deservedly relied on. If well made out, it is very little short of proving the absolute genuineness of the writings; for it carries them up to the age of the reputed authors, to an age in which it would have been difficult to have imposed forgeries in their names upon the Christian public, and in which there is no evidence that any forgeries were attempted. It proves, at least, that the writers of the New Testament possessed a species of local knowledge which could only belong to inhabitants of the country, and to persons living in the age, to which it relates. And the argument is peculiarly strong when applied to the writings of the New Testament, as they at once contain allusions to the manners and principles of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews; a variety which of itself would render a forgery very difficult, especially to writers of a posterior age [1].

The following are examples of this conformity:

I. Matt. ii. 22. "When he (Joseph) heard that Archelaus did *reign* (βασιλευει) in Judea in the room of his father Herod, *he was afraid* to go thither: notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of *Galilee.*"

In this passage it is asserted that Archelaus succeeded Herod as *king of Judea;* and it is implied that his power did *not* extend to *Galilee.* Now, we learn from JOSEPHUS* that Herod the Great, whose dominion included all the land of Israel, appointed Archelaus his successor *only* in Judea, Samaria, and Idumea; and that this disposition was ratified by the Roman emperor, and Archelaus *reigned* (βασιλευει) over the same. His *cruelty*, which is intimated by the evangelist, is also attested by Josephus.

II. Luke iii. 1. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar,—Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his

* Josephus was born at Jerusalem, A.D. 37. He wrote the History of the Jewish War some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in *the year 70, and he* finished his History of the Jews, A.D. 93.

brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis—the word of God came unto John."

It appears from JOSEPHUS, that by the will of Herod the Great and the decree of Augustus thereupon, his son Herod Antipas was appointed tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and his son Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis and the neighbouring countries; and that the former was removed by Caligula the successor of Tiberius, and the latter died in the twentieth year of Tiberius, when he had governed Trachonitis and Batanea and Gaulanitis thirty-seven years.

III. Mark vi. 17. "Herod had sent forth and laid hold upon John and bound him in prison, for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her."

Ib. vi. 22. "And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in and danced—"

JOSEPHUS. "Herodias was married to Herod[a], son of Herod the Great. They had a daughter whose name was Salome, after whose birth Herodias, in utter violation of the laws of her country, left her husband, and married Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, her husband's brother by the father's side."

IV. Acts xii. 1. "About that time, *Herod the king* stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church." In the conclusion of the same chapter Herod's *death* is represented to have taken place soon after this persecution.

Now it is very remarkable that this prince, who was the grandson of Herod the Great, had the kingdom of Judea and Samaria added by Claudius to his former dominions only three years before his death, within which period the aforesaid persecution is stated to have taken place; and that there never was a *king* of Judea after he

[a] Herodias's first husband is called Philip by the evangelist and Herod by Josephus. This difficulty will not appear considerable, when we recollect how common it was for the same person to bear two names; or when we consider that Herod the Great had children by seven or eight wives, and that Josephus *mentions* three of his sons under the name of Herod; while it is nevertheless *highly probable that* the brothers were distinguished from each other by some *additional name.*

died, nor for thirty years before, the three years above-mentioned excepted.

V. Acts xii. 19—23. "And he (Herod) went down from Judea to Cesarea, and there abode. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them; and the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man: and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

This event is also related by JOSEPHUS. The place (Cesarea), the set day, the gorgeous dress, the acclamations of the assembly, the peculiar turn of the flattery, the reception of it, the sudden and critical incursion of a violent disease, are circumstances noticed in his, as well as in the evangelical narrative.

VI. Acts xxiv. 24. "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul."

JOSEPHUS. "Agrippa gave his sister Drusilla in marriage to Azizus king of the Emesenes, when he had consented to be circumcised. But when Felix was procurator of Judea, having had a sight of her, he was mightily taken with her.—She was induced to transgress the laws of her country, and marry Felix."

VII. Acts xxv. 13. "And after certain days, king Agrippa and Berenice came to Cesarea to salute Festus." By this passage we are in effect told that Agrippa was king, but not of Judea; for he came to salute Festus, who at this time administered the government of that country at Cesarea.

Now we learn from JOSEPHUS, that this Agrippa being only seventeen years old at the death of his father Herod Agrippa, who is mentioned in the last article, Claudius appointed Cuspius Fadus prefect of Judea and the whole kingdom[a]; but that, "at the same time that he sent Felix

[a] *Fadus was succeeded by Tiberius Alexander, Cumanus, Felix and Festus.*

to be procurator, he promoted Agrippa from Chalcis to a greater *kingdom*, giving him the tetrarchy which had been Philip's; and he added moreover the kingdom of Lysanias and the province that had belonged to Varus."

VIII. Acts xiii. 7: "— the *deputy* of the country (Cyprus), Sergius Paulus, a prudent man."

The word here translated deputy, signifies *proconsul*. The provinces of the Roman empire were of two kinds: those belonging to the emperor, in which the governor was called proprætor; and those belonging to the senate, in which the governor was called proconsul. Now it appears from DIO CASSIUS, that Cyprus had been transferred to the senate in exchange for some others, and that after this exchange, the Roman governor was properly called a proconsul.

Ib. xviii. 12. "And when Gallio was the deputy (*proconsul*) of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection," &c.

The propriety of the title "proconsul" is here still more critical. For it appears from SUETONIUS and DIO CASSIUS that Achaia, after passing from the senate to the emperor, had been restored to the senate by Claudius, only six or seven years before this insurrection is said to have taken place; and under the following reign it ceased to be a Roman province at all.

IX. Judea being a Roman province, the governor had the sole power of life and death, but the Jews nevertheless had magistrates and a council invested with a subordinate and municipal authority. This œconomy is recognised as well in JOSEPHUS, as in every part of the Gospel narrative of our Saviour's crucifixion.

X. Acts ix. 31. "Then had the churches *rest* throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria."

This rest synchronizes with the attempt of Caligula to place his statue in the temple of Jerusalem, which, according to JOSEPHUS, for a season diverted the attention of the Jews from every other object.

XI. Acts xxi. 30. "And they took Paul and drew him out of the *temple;* and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came to the chief captain of the *band* that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Then the chief captain came near, and . . . . . commanded him to be carried into the *castle.* And when he came upon the *stairs,* so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people."

JOSEPHUS. "*Antonia* was built upon a rock fifty cubits high, steep on all sides. On that side where it joined to the porticoes of the *temple,* there were *stairs* reaching to each portico, by which the *guard* descended: for there was always lodged here *a Roman legion,* and posting themselves in their armor in several places in the porticoes, they kept a watch on the people on the feast days *to prevent all disorders.*"

XII. Acts iv. 1. Here we have a public officer under the title of captain of the temple, who, as he accompanied the priests and Sadducees in apprehending the apostles, was probably a Jew. Accordingly JOSEPHUS speaks of Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, as captain of the temple.

XIII. Acts xxv. 12. "Then Festus, when he had conferred with the *council,*" &c. That it was usual for the Roman presidents to have a council, appears from the following passage of the Oration of CICERO against Verres: "Illud negare posses, aut nunc negabis, te, concilio tuo dimisso, viris primariis, qui in consilio C. Sacerdotis fuerant, tibique esse volebant, remotis, de re judicatâ judicâsse?"

XIV. Acts xvi. 13. "And (at Philippi) on the sabbath, we went out of the city by *a river-side,* where prayer was wont to be made," or where a *προσευχη,* oratory, or place of prayer, was allowed.

PHILO mentions that the Jews of Alexandria flocked to the neighbouring *shores* to pray. JOSEPHUS gives a decree *of the city of* Halicarnassus, permitting the Jews to build

"*oratories by the sea-side.*" And TERTULLIAN mentions, among other Jewish rites, "orationes *litorales,*" that is, prayers by the *river-side.*

XV. Acts xxvi. 5. "After the most *straitest* sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee."

JOSEPHUS. "The Pharisees were reckoned the most religious of any of the Jews, and to be the *most exact* and skilful in explaining the laws."

The same Greek adjective is used in the Acts as in Josephus, though in one instance it is rendered "strait," and in the other "exact."

XVI. Mark vii. 3, 4. "The Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders: and many other things there be which they have received to hold."

JOSEPHUS. "The Pharisees have delivered to the people many institutions, as received from the fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses."

XVII. Acts xxiii. 8. "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both."

JOSEPHUS. "They (the Pharisees) believe every soul to be immortal, but that the soul of the good only passes into another body, and that the soul of the wicked is punished with eternal punishment." On the other hand, "it is the opinion of the Sadducees that souls perish with the bodies."

XVIII. Acts v. 17. St. Luke here intimates that the high priest was a Sadducee; which is a character one would not have expected to meet with in that station. JOSEPHUS, however, mentions John Hyrcanus, who died B.C. 107, and Ananus the younger, who lived about twenty *years after the* transaction recorded in Acts, as being high *priests, though* they were Sadducees.

XIX. Luke ix. 51. Our Lord was not received by the Samaritans, because he was going up to Jerusalem.

JOSEPHUS. "It was the custom of the Galileans who went up to the holy city at the feasts, to travel through the country of Samaria. As they were on their journey, some inhabitants of the village called Ginæa, falling upon them, killed a great many of them."

XX. John iv. 20. "Our fathers," said the Samaritan woman, "worshipped in *this mountain.*"

JOSEPHUS. —"commanding them to meet him at *Mount Gerizzim*, which is by them (the Samaritans) esteemed the most sacred of all mountains."

XXI. Matt. xxvi. 3. "Then assembled together the chief priests and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the *high priest, who was called Caiaphas.*"

We learn from JOSEPHUS, that "Joseph, *who was also called Caiaphas*, was made high priest by Valerius Gratus, the *predecessor* of Pontius Pilate, and was removed from his office by Vitellius, president of Syria, *after* Pilate was sent away from Judea; and consequently that he was high priest at the time of our Lord's passion.

XXII. Acts xxiii. 4. "And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he (Ananias) was the high priest." Now we are informed by JOSEPHUS that in truth Ananias was *not* the high priest, but that during the interval between the death of Jonathan who was murdered by order of Felix, and the accession of Ismael who was invested with the high-priesthood by Agrippa (in which interval it was that St. Paul was brought before the Jewish council), Ananias, having been formerly high priest, had taken upon himself the discharge of the office.

XXIII. We read in St. Matthew (xxvi. 59.) of "*the chief priests,*" and in St. Luke (iii. 1.) of "*Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests,*" though in strictness there

was only one high priest. In the Acts also (iv. 6.) Annas is called the high priest, though Caiaphas his son-in-law was in the office of the high priesthood.

The very same indeterminateness in the use of this title that exists in the Gospel, is observable in JOSEPHUS; which proves that the evangelists were habituated to the manner of speaking then in use. Josephus, besides speaking constantly of "*the high priests*," mentions by name "*the high priests Jonathan and Ananias.*" And he also speaks of "the high priest Ananus," though Ananus was not then in the office of the high priesthood.

XXIV. John xix. 19, 20. "And Pilate wrote a *title*, and put it on the cross." That such was the custom of the Romans, appears from passages in SUETONIUS and DIO CASSIUS: "Patrem familias—canibus objecit cum hoc *titulo*, Impie locutus parmularius."—"Having led him through the midst of the court or assembly *with a writing signifying the cause of his death*, and afterwards crucifying him."

Ib. "And it was written in *Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.*" That it was also usual about this time in Jerusalem to set up advertisements in *different* languages, is gathered from the account which JOSEPHUS gives of a message from Titus to the Jews.

XXV. Matt. xxvii. 26. "When he had *scourged* Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

JOSEPHUS. "Being *beaten*, they were crucified opposite to the citadel."—"Whom, *having first scourged with whips*, he crucified."—"He was burnt alive, *having been first beaten.*"

LIVY. "Productique omnes, *virgisque cæsi*, ac securi percussi."

XXVI. John xix. 16. "And he, *bearing his cross*, went forth."

PLUTARCH. "Every kind of wickedness produces its *own particular* torment, just as every malefactor when he is *brought forth to* execution, *carries* his own cross."

XXVII. John xix. 32. "Then came the soldiers, and *brake the legs* of the first and of the other which was crucified with him."

AURELIUS VICTOR, in commending Constantine's abolition of crucifixion, says; "Eò pius, ut etiam vetus veterrimumque supplicium, patibulum, et *cruribus suffringendis*, primus removerit."

XXVIII. Acts iii. 1. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the *ninth* hour."

JOSEPHUS. "Twice every day, in the morning and at the *ninth* hour, the priests perform their duties at the altar."

XXIX. Acts xv. 21. "*Moses being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.*"

JOSEPHUS. "He (Moses) gave us the law," and appointed that "*we should meet together every week to hear it read.*"

XXX. Acts xxi. 23, 24. "We have four men which have a *vow* on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, that they may *shave their heads.*"

JOSEPHUS. "It is customary for those who have been afflicted with some distemper or have labored under any other difficulties, to make *a vow* thirty days before they offer sacrifices, to abstain from wine and *shave the hair of their heads.*"

Ib. v. 24. "Them take, and purify thyself with them, and *be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads.*"

We learn from JOSEPHUS that it was an act of piety among the Jews, to defray for those who were under the Nazaritic vow, the expenses which attended its completion; and that the phrase was, "that they might be shaved."

XXXI. 2 Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes *save one.*"

JOSEPHUS. "He that acts contrary hereto, let him receive forty stripes *wanting one*, from the public officer."

As the written law allowed *forty* stripes, the coincidence proves that St. Paul was guided not by books, but by facts.

XXXII. Luke iii. 12. "Then came also *publicans* to be baptized." From this, as well as from the history of Levi or Matthew (Luke v. 29) and of Zaccheus (Luke xix. 2), it appears that the publicans or collectors of the Roman taxes were frequently, if not always, *Jews;* which is a circumstance one would not have expected.

JOSEPHUS. — "the chief men of the *Jews*, among whom was John the publican."

XXXIII. Acts xxii. 25. "And Paul said, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?"

CICERO. "Facinus est vinciri *civem Romanum; scelus verberari.*" "Cædebatur virgis in medio foro Messanæ, civis Romanus, Judices: cùm interea nullus gemitus, nulla vox alia istius miseri inter dolorem crepitumque plagarum, audiebatur, nisi hæc, *Civis Romanus sum.*"

XXXIV. Acts xxii. 27. St. Paul, though a *Jew*, declares himself to be a *Roman citizen.*

JOSEPHUS. "*The Jewish Roman citizens* who observe the rites of the Jewish religion at Ephesus."

Acts xxii. 28. "And the chief captain answered, *With a great sum obtained I this freedom.*"

DIO CASSIUS. "This privilege, which had been *bought formerly at a great price*, became so cheap," &c.

XXXV. Acts xxviii. 16. "But Paul was suffered to dwell by himself *with a soldier that kept him.*"

With which join *v.* 20. "For the hope of Israel I am bound with *this chain.*"

SENECA. "Quemadmodum eadem *catena* et custodiam *et militem* copulat, sic ista quæ tam dissimilia sunt, pariter *incedunt.*"

ULPIAN. "Proconsul æstimare solet, utrum in carcerem recipienda sit persona, an *militi tradenda.*"

And concerning Agrippa's confinement by Tiberius, JOSEPHUS speaks of "*the soldier to whom Agrippa was to be bound.*" After the accession of Caligula, Agrippa also, like Paul, was suffered to dwell, yet as a prisoner, in his own house.

XXXVI. Acts xxvii. 1. "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul *and certain other prisoners* unto one named Julius." This text intimates that the sending of persons from Judea to be tried at Rome, was an ordinary practice.

JOSEPHUS. "Felix for some slight offence *bound and sent to Rome* several priests...to answer for themselves to Cæsar."

Several other examples of the same practice occur in Josephus.

XXXVII. Acts xi. 27. Agabus is here said to have foretold a "*great dearth which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.*"

JOSEPHUS. "In their time (*i. e.* about the fifth or sixth year of Claudius) *a great dearth happened in Judea.*"

XXXVIII. Acts xviii. 2. "*Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome.*"

SUETONIUS, in his life of Claudius, says: "*Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes, Româ expulit.*"

XXXIX. Acts v. 37. "After this man, rose up *Judas of Galilee* in the days of *the taxing*, and *drew away much people after him.*"

JOSEPHUS. "He (the person who in another place is called by Josephus, *Judas the Galilean*, or *Judas of Galilee*) *persuaded not a few not to enrol themselves, when Cyrenius the censor was sent into Judea.*"

XL. Acts xxi. 38. "Art not thou that Egyptian which

before these days *madest an uproar*, and *leddest out into the wilderness* four thousand men that were murderers?"

JOSEPHUS has a passage in accordance with this, wherein mention is made of "*the Egyptian false prophet*," who, when Felix was procurator of Judea, gathered together a *multitude in "the wilderness"* with the design of attacking Jerusalem[a].

XLI. Acts xvii. 22. "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars-Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens...as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found *an altar with this inscription*, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

DIOGENES LAERTIUS, who wrote about the year 210, relates that Epimenides, who is supposed to have flourished nearly six hundred years before Christ, delivered Athens from a pestilence in the following manner: "Taking several sheep, some black, others white, he had them up to the Areopagus, and then let them go where they would, and gave orders to those who followed them, wherever any of them should lie down, to sacrifice it to the god to whom it belonged; and so the plague ceased." The historian then proceeds in these words: "Hence it has come to pass, *that, to this present time, may be found, in the boroughs of the Athenians*, ANONYMOUS *altars:* a memorial of the expiation then made."

PAUSANIAS, who wrote before the end of the second century, in his description of Athens, speaks of "*an altar of unknown gods*," and of "*altars of gods called unknown*."

PHILOSTRATUS, who wrote in the beginning of the third century, records it as an observation of Apollonius Tyanæus, "That it was wise to speak well of all the gods, especially at *Athens, where altars of unknown demons were erected*."

In the DIALOGUE PHILOPATRIS, supposed by many to have been written by Lucian about the year 170, we read of "*the unknown god of Athens*."

From this curious and important coincidence, it is evi*dent that* altars with the inscription "to the unknown

[a] See Paley's Evidences.

god," were existing at Athens when St. Paul is alleged to have been there. And it moreover seems that this was peculiar to the Athenians.

The conformity exhibited in the preceding examples, will appear more remarkable when we consider,

1. (2) That these agreements sometimes appear in minute, recondite, and very peculiar circumstances; in which, of all others, a forger would have been most likely to have been found tripping.

2. That a writer who was *unacquainted* with the circumstances of the Jewish nation *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, would find it difficult to give correct detailed accounts of transactions connected with those circumstances.

3. That there appears in the writers of the New Testament, a knowledge of the affairs of those times which we do not find in authors of later ages (2).

Amidst so many conformities, we are not to wonder that we meet with some difficulties. The principal of these are the following:

I. (3) In our translation of St. Luke's Gospel, we read, that the taxing, during which Jesus was born, "was first made," "when Cyrenius was governor of Syria[a]." Now it turns out that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria until twelve, or at the soonest ten, years after the birth of Christ; and that a taxing, census, or assessment, was made in Judea in the beginning of his government. It is assumed, therefore, that the evangelist refers to *this* taxing, and has consequently misplaced the date thereof.

The sentence in St. Luke may be construed thus: "This was the first assessment (or enrolment) of Cyrenius governor of Syria;" and the words "governor of Syria" may have been used after the name of Cyrenius as his addition or title; for as this title belonged to him at the time of writing the account, it might naturally enough be

[a] Luke ii. 2.

subjoined to his name, though acquired after the transaction which the account describes. From the evangelist's using the word "first," it is evident that he had two taxings or enrolments in contemplation. There is evidence of an enrolment under some person or other at the time of Christ's birth: if Cyrenius was that person, then the census made by him in the beginning of his government, would form a second, so as to occasion the other to be called the *first*[a] (3).

II. (4) We read in the third chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, that "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Jesus *began to be about thirty* years of age," though St. Luke himself and St. Matthew relate that he was born in the time of Herod, and therefore could not have been *less* than *thirty-one* years old in the fifteenth year of Tiberius.

[a] The following appears to be the best solution of this difficulty:—Towards the close of his reign, Herod the Great having incurred the displeasure of Augustus Cæsar, to whom his conduct had been misrepresented, the Roman emperor issued a decree reducing Judæa to a Roman province, and *commanding* an enrolment, or register, to be made of every person's estate, dignity, age, employment, and office. The making of this enrolment was confided to Cyrenius or Quirinius, a Roman senator, who was collector of the imperial revenue; but Herod having sent his trusty minister, Nicholas of Damascus, to Rome, the latter found means to undeceive the emperor, and soften his anger, in consequence of which the actual operation of the decree was suspended. *Eleven* years afterwards, however, it was carried into effect, when Archelaus, Herod's son and successor, was deposed by Augustus for maladministration, upon the complaint of the Jews, who, weary of the tyranny of the Herodian family, requested that Judæa might be made a Roman province. Cyrenius was now sent as president of Syria, with an armed force, to confiscate the property of Archelaus, and to complete the census, to which the Jewish people submitted. It was *this* establishment of the assessment or taxing under Cyrenius, which was necessary to complete the Roman census, to which the evangelist alludes in the parenthetical remark occurring in Luke ii. 2. This passage may be more correctly written and translated thus: "*It came to pass in those days,*" that is, a few days before our Saviour's birth, "*that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the land*" under Herod's dominion, "*should register themselves,*" preparatory to a census or taxing; (*this registration first took effect when Cyrenius was governor of Syria;*) *and all went to register themselves, every one to his own city.*"—(See Horne's Introduction and Major's Gospel of St. Luke.)—The difficulty being thus cleared up, it may be remarked that the passage, so far from furnishing an objection against St. Luke's Gospel, presents another instance of "the conformity of the facts occasionally referred to in *Scripture, with the state* of things in those times, as represented by foreign and *independent accounts.*"—J. W. S.

Now the original Greek affords no room for this objection. St. Luke's words in the original are allowed by the general opinion of learned men to signify, not that "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age," but that "he was about thirty years of age when he began his ministry." This construction being admitted, the adverb "about" gives us all the latitude we want, especially as it is here applied to a decimal number (4).

III. (5) An impostor of the name of Theudas, who created some disturbances, and was slain, is mentioned as well by Josephus as in Gamaliel's speech given in the Acts (v. 36); but Josephus refers to a person who appeared seven years after Gamaliel's speech was delivered.

Now setting aside the possibility that Josephus may have been mistaken as to the date of Theudas's appearance, there might very probably have been two impostors of the same name; for there were four persons of the name of Simon within forty years, and three of the name of Judas within ten years, all of whom were leaders of insurrections. Archbishop Usher was of opinion that one of these Judases was Gamaliel's Theudas (5).

IV. Matt. xxiii. 35. (6) "That upon you (the Jews) may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

Zacharias the prophet is described in the superscription of his prophecy as the son of Berechiah; but of his death we have no account.

There is little doubt but that our Saviour alluded to a Zacharias whose death is related in the second book of Chronicles* in a manner which perfectly agrees with that allusion, but whose father's name was Jehoiada; and that the name of Barachias has been since added or substituted for that of Jehoiada, by some transcriber, who took it from the title of the prophecy, which happened to be better known to him than the history in the Chronicles (6).

* Chap. xxiv. 20, 21.

CHAPTER VII.

Undesigned Coincidences.

(1) BETWEEN the letters which bear the name of St. Paul, and his history in the Acts, there exist many notes of correspondency. Now as the simple perusal of the writings is sufficient to prove that neither the history was taken from the letters, nor the letters from the history; and the undesignedness of the coincidences demonstrates that they were not produced by contrivance; while their closeness and number render it impossible for us to regard them as accidental concurrences of fiction, they must be considered as clear proofs of the genuineness of their writings, and the truth of the narrative (1).

These undesigned agreements are fully exhibited in the "Horæ Paulinæ." It is only necessary in this place, therefore, to point out how the argument *bears* upon the general question of the Christian history.

(2) First, the writer of the epistles ascribed to St. Paul, affirms his own performance of miracles, and that "*the miracles were the signs of an apostle*[a]." If this testimony comes from St. Paul's own hand, it is invaluable; and that it does, the argument before us affords a firm assurance.

Secondly, it shews the reality of the series of action represented in those epistles; which alone lays a foundation for the first of the propositions which form the subject of the first part of the present work.

Thirdly, it proves that the author of the Acts of the Apostles was well acquainted with St. Paul's history, and was probably what he professes himself to be, namely, a companion of St. Paul's travels. This, if true, greatly establishes the credit even of St. Luke's Gospel. Whatever is proved concerning the Acts, may, it is conceived, be safely applied to the Gospel of St. Luke, considering that they are two parts of the same history; for though there *are instances of second* parts being forgeries, there appear

[a] Rom. xv. 18, 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

to be none where the second part is genuine, and the first spurious (2).

(3) It may here be observed, that the style of St. John's First Epistle is not at all the style of St. Paul, St. James, or St. Peter; but that it bears a remarkable resemblance to the style of the Gospel ascribed to St. John. Writings so circumstanced, prove themselves, and one another, to be genuine. And this correspondency is the more valuable, as the Epistle itself asserts the writer's personal knowledge of Christ's history[a] (3).

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the History of the Resurrection.

THIS part of the evidence of Christianity is of great weight; (1) not because the Resurrection ought to be accounted a more decisive proof of supernatural agency, or is better attested than other miracles, but from the certainty we have that the apostles and first teachers of our religion asserted the fact. Every book and epistle of the New Testament recognises it: every writing, from the apostolic age to the present, genuine or spurious, on the side of Christianity or against it, represents the resurrection of Christ to be received without disagreement by all Christians, as a fact alleged from the beginning by the propagators of the institution (1).

(2) The only points which present themselves, are, Whether the apostles knowingly published a falsehood; or, Whether they were themselves deceived (2).

(3) The first of these suppositions is generally given up; it being extremely improbable that such men as the apostles would engage with such zeal throughout their lives in so dangerous an undertaking, as *a scheme* (3).

(4) As to the second supposition, which, resolving their conduct into *enthusiasm*, would class the evidence of the

[a] Chap. i. 43.

resurrection with the stories of the apparitions of dead men, there are circumstances in the narrative that entirely destroy this comparison. Our Saviour, after his resurrection, was seen and approached by many, not only separately, but together; not only by night, but by day; not once only, but several times. And they not only saw him, but touched him, conversed with him, ate with him, examined his person to satisfy their doubts. These particulars are decisive; but they stand indeed upon the credit of our records.—The insinuation of enthusiasm may, however, be repelled by a circumstance arising out of *the nature of the case*, the reality of which must be confessed by all who allow that the resurrection of Christ was asserted by his disciples from the beginning, which appears to be undenied; and that circumstance is, the non-production of the dead body. It is related in the history, that the Jews reported that Christ's followers had stolen it away. This account, though loaded with great improbabilities, (such as the situation of his disciples, their fears for their own safety at the time, the difficulty of succeeding[a], and the inevitable consequences of detection and failure,) was nevertheless the most credible account that could be given of the matter. But it proceeds entirely upon the supposition of fraud. What account can be given of the body upon the supposition of enthusiasm? It is impossible that our Lord's followers could believe that he was risen from the dead, if his corpse was lying before them; and if it was absent, fraud, and not enthusiasm, must have carried it away (4).

But further, if we admit that the Resurrection of Christ was asserted at Jerusalem a few days after his burial, it is evident that if his body could have been found, the Jews would have produced it; and the attempt of the apostles could not have survived for a moment such a refutation of the whole story. And the fact that the Jews had not the body to produce, but were obliged to meet the testimony of

[a] "Especially at the full moon, the city full of people, many probably passing the whole night, as Jesus and his disciples had done, in the open air, the sepulchre *so near to the city as to* be now inclosed within the walls."—PRIESTLEY *on the Resurrection.*

the apostles by an answer which we have seen is entirely inconsistent with the supposition of their enthusiasm, will be the more remarkable, if we believe St. Matthew when he says that the Jews were advertised of the expectation of Christ's disciples, and that in consequence of this, the body was guarded by an armed force.

CHAPTER IX.

The Propagation of Christianity.

SECTION I.

IN this argument, the first consideration is the fact—in what degree, within what time, and to what extent, Christianity was actually propagated.

I. (1) The accounts of the matter, which may be collected from our *historical scriptures*, are as follow:

Within what may be termed the first period in the propagation of Christianity, extending from the ascension to something more than a year afterwards, the preaching of the religion was confined to Jerusalem. There, a few days after the ascension, we find an assembly of one hundred and twenty disciples. On the day of Pentecost, only ten days after the ascension, the Scripture history relates, that, upon a signal display of Divine Agency attending the persons of the apostles, there were added to the society about three thousand souls[a]; and that soon after this, it consisted of about five thousand[b]. And we read, that shortly afterwards, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women[c];" that "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith[d]."

Within the second period, which comprises about four years, the converts having been driven from Jerusalem by

[a] *Acts ii. 41.* [b] Ib. iv. 4. [c] Ib. v. 14. [d] Ib. vi. 7.

a persecution, established churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

Hitherto the apostles did not understand that they were at liberty to propose the religion to mankind at large. But within what may be called the third period, extending from the seventh year after the ascension to the twenty-eighth, Christianity was preached among the Gentiles. Upon this, it spread itself through almost all the numerous districts of the Lesser Asia, through Greece, the islands of the Ægean Sea, and the sea-coast of Africa, and had extended itself to Rome, and other parts of Italy. At Antioch in Syria, at Joppa, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Berea, Iconium, Derbe, Antioch in Pisidia, at Lydda and Saron, the number of converts is intimated by the expressions, "a great number," "great multitudes," "much people." Converts are mentioned, without any designation of their number, at Tyre, Cesarea, Troas, Athens, Philippi, Lystra, Damascus. And during all this time, Jerusalem, where the Founder of the religion was crucified, continued not only the centre of the mission, but a principal seat of the religion: for, about twenty-eight years after the ascension, when St. Paul returned to Jerusalem, the other apostles pointed out to him, "how many thousands (μυριάδες, ten thousands) there were in that city who believed[a] (1)."

Upon this abstract and the writing from which it is taken, the following observations seem material to be made:

(2) 1. The account comes from a person who was himself concerned in a portion of what he relates, and was contemporary with the whole of it. This may be positively asserted, from the unaffectedness and simplicity with which he informs us of his presence upon certain occasions, and from the entire absence of art and design in these notices, setting aside the numerous ancient testimonies to his history.

2. This account is a very incomplete account of the preaching and propagation of Christianity. Two-thirds of the Evangelic narrative are taken up with the history of St. Paul: and even in this, large portions of time are often passed over with very scanty notice.

[a] Acts xxi. 20

3. The account is for this very reason the more credible. Had it been the author's design to have *displayed* the early progress of Christianity, he would have undoubtedly set forth accounts of the preaching of other apostles besides St. Peter and St. Paul.

4. The intimations of the number of converts, and of the success of the preaching of the apostles, come out for the most part *incidentally*, being drawn from the historian by the occasion. This tends to remove the suspicion of a design to exaggerate or deceive.(2)

(3) PARALLEL TESTIMONIES with the history are *the letters of St. Paul and the other apostles.* Those of St. Paul are addressed to the churches of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Galatia, Ephesus, Rome, and Colosse, or rather Colosse and Laodicea jointly; and recognise by reference the churches of Judea, the churches of Asia, and "all the churches of the Gentiles." In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul declares, "that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ[a];" and in the Epistle to the Colossians, that the Gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven[b]." This last expression is hyperbolical, but it could only be used by a writer who entertained a strong sense of the subject. The first Epistle of Peter accosts the Christians dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (3)

II. It comes next to be considered how far these accounts are confirmed or followed up by other evidence.

It has been already observed that (4) (*a*) TACITUS, an historian of great reputation, and a stranger and enemy to religion, in a passage concerning the fire that happened at Rome in the tenth year of Nero, which coincides with the thirtieth after the ascension, testifies that the religion began at Jerusalem; that it spread throughout Judea[a]; and that it had *a vast multitude* of converts at Rome. This was

[a] Rom. xv. 19. [b] Col. i. 23.

[a] (β) The temporary check mentioned by Tacitus probably refers to the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, and which, by dispersing the converts, caused the institution in some measure to disappear (§).

about six years after St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, and something more than two years after he arrived there himself (*a*).

(*γ*) From a letter of PLINY the younger to Trajan, written not eighty years after the ascension, we learn that Christianity had prevailed for a long time and to a great extent in Bithynia and Pontus, distant as they were from Judea, the centre from which it spread; and that in spite of persecution, Christians of all ages and of every rank abounded, not only in the cities but in the villages and in the open country, insomuch that there was a visible desertion of the temples and sacred solemnities (*γ*). And there is no evidence that the Christians were, nor has any reason been offered why they should be, more numerous in Pontus and Bithynia than in other parts of the Roman empire.

(*δ*) JUSTIN MARTYR, who wrote about thirty years after Pliny, and one hundred and six after the ascension, has these remarkable words: "There is not a nation . . . . among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe by the name of the crucified Jesus."

TERTULLIAN, who comes about fifty years after Justin, appeals to the Governors of the Roman empire in these terms: "We were but of yesterday, and we have filled your cities, islands, towns, and boroughs, the camp, the senate, and the forum." This public boasting was not only useless but unnatural, unless it had been at least both true and notorious that great multitudes of Christians, of all ranks and orders, were to be found in most parts of the Roman world. Tertullian enumerates as belonging to Christ, beside many other countries, the "Moors and Gætulians of Africa, the borders of Spain, several nations of France, and parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans, the Sarmatians, Daci, Germans, and Scythians;" and the *number* of the Christians is thus intimated by him: "Although so great a multitude that in almost every city we form the greater part, we pass our time in modesty and *in silence.*"

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, who preceded Tertullian by a

few years, on comparing the success of Christianity with that of the most celebrated philosophical institutions, speaks of it as "spread throughout the whole world," in every nation, city, and village, in spite of the most determined opposition both of rulers and people; and as embraced by "not a few of the philosophers themselves."

ORIGEN, only thirty years after Tertullian, says: "In every part of the world there are innumerable and immense multitudes" of Christians: "and it is wonderful to observe how, in so short a time, the religion has increased, amidst punishment and death, and every kind of torture (8)."

It is well known that within less than eighty years after this, THE ROMAN EMPIRE BECAME CHRISTIAN UNDER CONSTANTINE: and it is probable that he declared himself on the side of the Christians because they were the powerful party; for, besides the fact that Maxentius, his rival, favored and flattered them, ARNOBIUS, who wrote immediately before Constantine's accession, speaks of the whole world as filled with the doctrine of Christ, and of the strange revolution of opinion among men of the greatest genius; orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, and physicians, having come over to the institution, even in the face of threats, executions, and tortures. Moreover not more than twenty years after Constantine's entire possession of the empire, JULIUS FIRMICUS MATERNUS calls upon the emperors Constantine and Constans to extirpate the dying relics of the ancient religion[a]. And fifty years afterwards, JEROME represents the decline of Paganism in language conveying the same idea of its approaching extinction[b] (ε) (4).

(5) The number of early Christian *writers* may convey to us some notion of the diffusion of Christianity, or rather of the learning and labors of many Christians in those early ages. Jerome's catalogue contains a list of *sixty-six*

[a] "Licèt adhuc in quibusdam regionibus idololatriæ morientia palpitent membra; tamen in eo res est, ut a Christianis omnibus terris postiferum hoc malum funditùs amputetur;" and in another place: "Modicum tantum superest, ut legibus vestris—extincta idololatriæ pereat funesta contagio."

[b] "Solitudinem patitur et in urbe gentilitas. Dii quondam nationum, cum *bubonibus et noctuis*, in solis culminibus remanserunt."

writers up to the year 306, and of *fifty-four* between that time and his own, viz. A.D. 392. Several of these set forth public defences of the religion, and the works of many of them were very voluminous[a] (5).

SECTION II.

Reflections upon the preceding account.

THE history of the progress of Christianity is without a parallel. (1) It must be observed, that we have not been referring to the progress and describing the prevalency of an opinion founded upon philosophical or critical arguments, upon mere deductions of reason, or the construction of ancient writings; but of a system the very basis and postulatum of which was, a supernatural character ascribed to a particular person who had then recently been living in the world (1). (2) To introduce a new faith, a new way of thinking and acting, and to persuade many nations to quit the religion wherein their ancestors from time immemorial have lived and died; to make them forsake and despise the deities which they have been accustomed to reverence and worship; is a work of almost insurmountable difficulty. If men in these days are Christians in consequence of their education, in submission to authority, or in compliance with fashion; let us recollect that with the first race of Christians, and with millions who succeeded them, the very contrary of this was the case. To set forth, therefore, the force of education, is but to confirm the evidence of Christianity (2).

But in order to judge of the argument which is drawn from the early propagation of Christianity, there surely can be no fairer way of proceeding, than to compare what we have seen on the subject with the success of Christian missions in modern ages. (3) "Notwithstanding," observes Dr. Robertson, "the labor of missionaries for upwards of two hundred years, and the establishments of different Christian

[a] *Alexander, bishop of* Jerusalem, founded a library in that city, A.D. 212; *and Pamphilus, a friend of* Origen, founded one at Cæsarea, A.D. 294.

nations who support them, there are not twelve thousand Indian Christians, and those almost entirely outcasts."

Lamentable as this is, it affords a strong proof of the Divine origin of the religion. What had the Apostles to assist them in propagating Christianity which the missionaries have not? Nothing but a high degree of piety and zeal in the missionaries, could engage them in their undertaking; and their conduct is unblameable. The religion itself remains the same. With respect to learning, they are superior to all the Apostles. They come from a country to which the Hindoos look up with deference; whereas the Apostles came forth under the name of Jews, which was precisely the character the Gentiles despised and derided. If it be disgraceful in India to become a Christian, it could not be much less so to be enrolled amongst those, "quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat." The theology of the ancient religion is in both cases virtually the same: the sacred rites of the western polytheism were gay, festive, and licentious; the rites of oriental paganism partake of the same character with a more avowed indecency. If in India a powerful caste possess the exclusive administration of the established worship; in ancient Greece and Rome the popular religion was strictly incorporated with the state, the highest officers of government bearing the most distinguished part in the celebration of the public rites. The origin of the prevailing mythology is in both cases lost in fable. In both we find it credited by the bulk of the people, but by the learned and philosophic part of the community, either derided or regarded as only fit to be upholden for the sake of its political uses.—If it should be allowed that the ancient heathens believed in their religion less generally than the present Indians do, still it is by no means probable that this circumstance would afford any facility to the work of the apostles above that of the modern missionaries. General infidelity is the hardest soil which the propagators of a new religion can have to work upon. It does not appear that the Jews who had a body of historical evidence to offer for their religion, and who held forth the *expectation* of a future state, derived any great advan-

tage as to the extension of their system, from the discredit into which the popular religion had fallen with many of their heathen neighbours.

The history of modern Christian missions in other countries besides India, shows in the same manner, in a more or less degree, the widely disproportionate effects which now attend the preaching of Christianity, compared with what followed the ministry of Christ and his apostles. And from this disparity of success, under circumstances either alike or not so unlike as to account for the difference, a conclusion is fairly drawn in support of what our histories deliver concerning the first preachers of the Gospel; namely, that they possessed means of conviction which we have not, that they had proofs to appeal to which we want (3).

SECTION III.

Of the Religion of Mahomet.

(1) THE only event in the history of mankind which admits of comparison with the propagation of Christianity, is the success of Mahometanism. The Mahometan institution was rapid in its progress, was recent in its history, and was founded upon a supernatural or prophetic character assumed by its author (1). In these articles the resemblance to Christianity is confessed. But there are points of difference which entirely separate the two cases:

I. (2) Mahomet did not found his pretensions upon proofs of supernatural agency capable of being known and attested by others. For, in the Koran, he himself expressly disclaims the power of working miracles[a]; and therefore we are not bound to regard the miraculous stories related of him by Abulfeda, who wrote his life about six hundred years after his death; or those which are found in the legend of Al-Jannabi, who came two hundred years later (2).

Now this difference of itself constitutes a bar to all

[a] See Paley's Evidences.

reasoning from one case to the other. [3] The success of a religion founded on a miraculous history, shows the credit which was given to that history; and this credit, given by persons capable of knowing the truth and interested to inquire after it, is evidence of the reality of the history, and consequently of the truth of the religion. So far as Mahomet's authentic history was of a nature capable of being witnessed by others, admit it to be true, and Mahomet might still be an impostor, or an enthusiast, or a union of both: but admit the truth of almost any part of Christ's history which was within the cognizance of his followers, and he must have come from God. Where matter of fact is not in question, where miracles are not alleged, the progress of a religion is no better argument of its truth than the prevalency of any system of opinions in natural religion, morality, or physics, is a proof of the truth of those opinions. And we know that this sort of argument is not admissible in any branch of philosophy whatever [3].

But it will be said, If one religion could make its way without miracles, why might not another? But [4] this is not the question: the proper question is, Whether a change of religion, founding itself in miracles, could succeed, without any reality to rest upon? Mahomet's disclaiming miraculous powers, whilst he refers to the miracles of preceding prophets, appears to be one proof, amongst others, that it could not succeed, or at least would be very unlikely to do so. One thing is certain; except in the case of the Jewish and Christian religions, there is no tolerably well-authenticated account of a religion having been set up by dint of miraculous pretences [4].

II. The establishment of Mahomet's religion was effected by causes which in no degree appertained to the origin of Christianity.

If Mahomet had confined himself to persuasion, as he did during the first twelve years of his mission, there is sufficient reason to believe that we of the present day *should never have* heard of Mahometanism or its author.

For, [5] "three years," says Gibbon, "were silently employed in the conversion of *fourteen* converts." And "the number of proselytes in the seventh year of his mission, may be estimated by the absence of *eighty-three men and eighteen women* who retired to Æthiopia[5]." Yet this progress, such at it was, appears to have been aided by some very important advantages which Mahomet found in his situation, in his mode of conducting his design, and in his doctrine, and which in no degree appertained to the origin of Christianity[5].

[6] 1. (*a*) Mahomet was the grandson of the most powerful and honourable family in Mecca, and by his marriage became a person of very considerable wealth long before the commencement of his mission (*a*)

2. (*β*) Mahomet conducted his design, in the outset especially, with great art and prudence. He conducted it as a politician would conduct a plot. His first application was to his own family. This gained him his wife's uncle, who was a considerable person in Mecca, together with his cousin Ali, who was then a youth of great expectation, and distinguished for his attachment, impetuosity, and courage. He next addressed himself to Abu Becr, a man among the first of the Koreish in wealth and influence. Abu Becr brought over five other principal persons in Mecca, whose solicitations prevailed upon five more of the same rank. This was the work of three years, at a time when there was no *established* religion in Mecca to contend with. During this period, everything was transacted in secret; and it is remarkable that these first proselytes all ultimately attained to riches and honors, to the command of armies, and the government of kingdoms (*β*).

3. (*γ*) The Arabians acknowledged one supreme Deity, but had associated with him many objects of idolatrous worship. The great doctrine with which Mahomet set out, *was the strict* and exclusive unity of God. He speciously *told the Arabs* that Abraham their great ancestor, Ishmael

he father of their nation, Moses the lawgiver of the Jews, nd Jesus the author of Christianity, had all asserted the ame thing; that their followers had universally corrupted he truth; and that *he* was now commissioned to restore :(γ).

4. (δ) Two purposes pervade the whole of the Koran and he institution delivered therein; namely, to make converts, nd to make those converts soldiers.

First, When Mahomet began to preach, he professed to he Jews, Christians, and Pagan Arabs, that his was no ther than their own original religion.

Secondly, The Koran is ever describing the future nguish of unbelievers, their despair, regret, penitence, and orment. The terror which even to us they seem well alculated to inspire, must have been a powerful application o those to whom they were immediately addressed.

Thirdly, On the other hand, his voluptuous paradise, his obes of silk, his palaces of marble, his rivers and shades, is groves and couches, his wines, his dainties, and his eventy-two virgins of resplendent beauty and eternal outh that were assigned to each of the faithful, intoxicated he imaginations and seized the passions of his Eastern ollowers.

Fourthly, Mahomet's highest heaven was reserved for hose who fought his battles, or expended their fortunes in is cause.

Fifthly, His doctrine of predestination was applicable, nd was applied by him, to the same purpose of fortifying nd exalting the courage of his adherents.

Sixthly, Although Mahomet laid a restraint upon the lrinking of wine, he took care to allow an indulgence for which a far stronger passion exists in those regions, than or drinking inebriating liquors: he allowed to each man our wives, with the liberty of changing them at pleasure, ogether with the persons of all his captives; an irresistible ribe to an Arabian warrior. "God is minded," says he, peaking of this very subject, "to make his religion light to ou; *for man* was created weak." How would Mahomet

have succeeded with the Christian lesson in his mouth—"whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It must be added, that Mahomet did not venture upon the prohibition of wine till the seventeenth year of his mission, when his military successes had completely established his authority. And the same observation holds of the fast of the Ramadan, and of the pilgrimage to Mecca (δ) (6).

The part of Mahomet's life which has been hitherto considered, relates only to the twelve or thirteen years of his peaceable preaching. A new scene is now unfolded. (7) The city of Medina was at that time harassed by the mutual persecutions of the Jews and Christians, and of various Christian sects. The religion of Mahomet, embracing the principles common to all, presented in some measure a point of union or compromise to these parties, and nothing offensive or very improbable to their Pagan fellow-citizens. Under these circumstances, his missionary contrived to collect a congregation of forty persons. But it was a political association which ultimately introduced Mahomet into Medina. Distracted and disgusted by the hereditary contentions of two hostile tribes, the inhabitants saw, in the admission of the prophet's authority, a rest from their miseries; and they accordingly sent an embassy to him, composed of believers and unbelievers and of persons of both tribes, with whom a treaty of strict alliance and support was concluded. After this, Mahomet entered Medina as its sovereign. He now pretended that a divine commission was given him, to attack the infidels, destroy idolatry, and set up the true faith by the sword. An early victory over a very superior force, established the renown of his arms and of his personal character. In the nine following years of his life, he commanded his army in person in eight general engagements, and undertook, by himself or his lieutenants, fifty military enterprises (7).

From this time we have nothing left to account for, but *these three things*: that Mahomet should collect an army, *that his army* should conquer, and that his religion should

succeed with his conquests. [8] With respect to the first point, the roving Arabs from all sides crowded round the standard of religion, victory, and rapine, rewarded with the persons of their female captives, as well as with the promise of the highly painted joys of a voluptuous paradise. With respect to the second, the condition of Arabia, which was occupied by small independent tribes; the weakness of the Roman provinces; and the distracted state of the Persian empire, facilitated the conquest of those countries. And as to the third point, conversion or death was the only choice offered to idolaters; conversion, or subjection and tribute, was the option of the Jews and Christians: moreover, Mahomet's victories not only operated in his favor by the natural effect of conquest, but were constantly represented as divine declarations of his mission [8].

[9] The truth is, that the success of Mahometanism bears so little resemblance to the early propagation of Christianity, that no inference can justly be drawn from it to the prejudice of the Christian argument.

Mahomet made his way in the midst of conquests and triumphs, in the darkest ages and countries of the world, and where success in arms not only obliged men to bow down in submission, but was considered as a sure testimony of divine approbation. But, without force, without power, without support, without one external circumstance of attraction or influence, JESUS prevailed against the prejudices, the learning, the hierarchy, of his country; against the ancient religious opinions, the pompous sacred rites, the philosophy, the wisdom, the authority, of the Roman empire, in the most polished and enlightened period of its existence. The propagation of Christianity is an *unique* in the history of mankind. A Jewish Peasant overthrew the religion of the world [9].

PART III.

A BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF SOME POPULAR OBJECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

The Discrepancies between the several Gospels.

To reject the substance of a story on account of some diversity in the circumstances with which it is related, is equally rash and unphilosophical. (1) The daily experience of courts of justice teaches us that the usual character of human testimony, is substantial truth under circumstantial variety. There, a close and minute agreement even induces the suspicion of confederacy and fraud. In like manner, in written histories touching upon the same scenes of action, numerous, and sometimes important, variations occur, and occasionally absolute contradictions: yet these are not deemed sufficient to shake the credibility of the main fact. The embassy of the Jews to deprecate the execution of Caligula's order to place his statue in their temple, Philo places in harvest; whereas Josephus, his contemporary, places it in seed time. No reader is led by this inconsistency to doubt whether such an embassy was sent or such an order given. Our own history supplies examples of the same kind. Thus Lord Clarendon relates that the Marquis of Argyle, in the reign of Charles the Second, was condemned to be hanged, and was accordingly hanged on the same day: on the contrary, Burnet, Woodrow, Heath, Echard, concur in stating that he was beheaded, and that he was condemned on the Saturday and executed on the Monday. Did any one ever doubt from this, whether the Marquis of Argyle was executed or not (1)?

(2) A great deal of the discrepancy observable in the *Gospels arises* from *omission*, from one writer noticing a *fact or passage* in Christ's life which is unnoticed by

another. Now there are a great many particulars, and some of them of importance, mentioned by Josephus in his Antiquities, which, as one would have supposed, ought to have been put down in their place in the Jewish Wars. And Suetonius, Tacitus, Dio Cassius, who have all written of the reign of Tiberius, have each mentioned many things omitted by the rest. No objection, however, is thence taken to the credit of their respective histories (2).

But (3) discrepancies will be especially numerous when men do not mean to write histories, but *memoirs;* when, out of many similar things, they only relate such as offered themselves more immediately to their attention, came in the way of their inquiries, occurred to their recollection, or were suggested by their particular design at the time of writing (3). This particular design may sometimes appear. Thus (4) it seems to have been the particular design of St. Matthew, in writing the history of the Resurrection, to attest the faithful performance of Christ's promise to his disciples to go before them into Galilee; because he alone, except Mark, who seems to have taken it from him, has recorded this promise; and he alone has confined his narrative to that single, but preconcerted and most public, manifestation of our Lord's person, whereby it was fulfilled. But that there is nothing in St. Matthew's language to import that this was the first or only appearance of Christ, is evident from the fact that St. Mark uses the same terms[a] concerning it, and yet records two other prior appearances[b].

CHAPTER II.

Erroneous Opinions imputed to the Apostles.

SOME assert that the apostles entertained erroneous opinions; and they allege this as a ground for rejecting Christianity.

(1) It has been objected, for instance, that passages of

[a] *Chap. xvi. 7.* [b] Chap. xvi. 12—14.

the Old Testament are found in the New, applied in a sense and to events apparently different from that which they bear and from those to which they belong in the original. It is probable that many of these quotations were intended by the writers of the New Testament as nothing more than *accommodations*. Without always undertaking to assert that the occasion was contemplated by the author of the words, they quoted passages which suited and fell in with the occasion before them; a common practice with writers of all countries. Those prophecies which are alleged with more solemnity, and which are accompanied with a precise declaration that they originally respected the event related, are truly alleged (1).

Another error imputed to the first Christians was, the expected approach of the day of judgment. (2) This objection may be introduced by a remark upon a somewhat similar example. Our Saviour, speaking to St. Peter of St. John, said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee[a]?" These words, we find, had been so misconstrued, that a report from thence went abroad among the brethren, that this disciple should not die. Suppose that this had come down to us amongst the prevailing opinions of the early Christians, and that the particular circumstance, from which the mistake sprang, had been lost, some at this day would have been ready to regard and quote the error, as an impeachment of the whole Christian system; yet with how little justice would such a presumption have been taken up. To those who think that the Scriptures lead us to believe that the early Christians, and even the apostles[b], expected the approach of the day of judgment in their own times, the same reflection will occur. It was an error, it may be likewise said, which would effectually hinder those who entertained it from acting the part of impostors (2).

[a] John xxi. 22.

[b] "We beseech you, brethren," writes St. Paul, "that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." 2 Thess. ii. 2. And Dr. Macknight *has clearly shown*, that when Christ's coming is spoken of, other events than *the final judgment* are often intended; and that the apostles well knew that *the day of judgment* was far distant.—J. W. S.

But, [3] if we should admit, for the sake of argument, that the apostles did entertain erroneous opinions, this circumstance would in no way affect their historical credibility, since we may fairly distrust a person's judgment, and yet have no grounds for disbelieving his testimony, so far at least as it relates to matters requiring only the evidence of the senses. Allowing for a moment, that some of the opinions held by the apostles could not be vindicated, the difficulty would then be to meet this question: If we once admit the fallibility of the apostolic judgment, where are we to stop, or in what can we rely upon it? And to this, the following would be a complete answer: The truth of the Christian religion consists in the truth of its doctrines, and does not depend upon the propriety of the comparisons or the validity of the arguments which the apostles, in asserting the doctrines, have brought into the discussion; and the authority of the doctrines may be established by proving the substantial truth of the Christian history, which does not depend upon the judgment of the apostles, but upon their *testimony*[a] [3].

CHAPTER III.

The Connexion of Christianity with the Jewish History.

UNDOUBTEDLY our Saviour assumes the divine origin of the Mosaic institution: and independently of his authority, it would be very difficult to assign any other cause for the commencement or existence of that institution; especially for the singular circumstance of the Jews adhering to the unity of the Supreme Being, when every other people slid into polytheism; for their inferiority in the arts of peace and war, whilst they were superior to all other nations in their sentiments and doctrines relating to the Deity. Undoubtedly also our Saviour recognises the prophetic character of many of their ancient writers. So far, therefore,

[a] *The original* work has not been strictly adhered to in the beginning and *termination of this* chapter.—J. W. S.

we, as Christians, are bound to go. Christianity has been attacked, however, upon the supposition that it is answerable, in its own credibility, for the genuineness of every book, and the circumstantial truth of each separate passage of the Old Testament. But without entering into the question, whether every book is genuine, and every passage true, we may reply, that except where Christ expressly ascribes a divine authority to particular predictions, no conclusion can be strictly drawn from his using the Jewish Scriptures, besides the proof of their notoriety and reception at that time.

CHAPTER IV.

Rejection of Christianity.

(1) IT must be acknowledged that the Christian religion, although it converted great numbers, did not produce a universal or even a general conviction in the minds of men, when it first appeared (1).

The matter of the objection furnished by this circumstance, divides itself into two parts—as it relates to THE JEWS, and as it relates to THE HEATHEN.

I. Respecting the objection as it relates to THE JEWS, it should be observed, that (2) while upon the subject of the truth of Christianity, there is with *us* but one question, namely, whether the miracles were actually wrought; the Jew of our Saviour's time, after allowing the reality of the miracle, found it difficult to persuade himself that Jesus was the Messiah. This is clearly intimated by the evangelists: and to this point, their testimony may be allowed, since if they could be suspected of falsehood, their accounts would rather have magnified than diminished the effects of the miracles. The seventh chapter of St. John's Gospel exhibits the reasoning of different descriptions of persons *upon the occasion of* a miracle which all are represented to

have acknowledged as real. Some thought that Jesus could not be the Christ; and they gave their reason in these words: "We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." Others did believe him to be the Messiah, yet did not consider the miracle as of itself decisive of the question, but founded their opinion upon a kind of comparative reasoning: "When Christ cometh will he do *more* miracles than those which this man hath done?" It also appears from the eleventh chapter of the same Gospel, that when Lazarus was raised from the dead, all the Jews who were present admitted the miracle, but yet some of them still disbelieved that Jesus was the Messiah. Again in the ninth chapter, we read that after the Jewish rulers, notwithstanding the strictest scrutiny, had failed in discrediting the evidence of the cure of a man who was born blind, they resisted the conclusion to which the miracle led, saying: "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is (2)."

This turn of thought arose from two opinions which are proved to have subsisted among the Jews, in which they had been brought up from their infancy, and of the truth of which they entertained no doubt. (3) The one was, their expectation of a Messiah of a character totally contrary to what the appearance of Jesus bespoke him to be; the other, their persuasion of the agency of demons in the production of supernatural effects. The first put them upon seeking out some excuse to themselves for not receiving Jesus as the Christ; and the second supplied them with just such an excuse as they wanted. And no reply could be made to this, but that which our Saviour did make, by showing that the tendency of his mission was so adverse to the views with which the objectors themselves supposed Satan to act, that it could not be supposed that he would assist in carrying it on (3). (4) The miracles in their early history, upon which the Jews so much relied, were wrought before the solution of diabolic agency was invented: and the later Jews, brought up in a reverence for their national *religion and* polity, would never apply to their history a

reasoning which tended to overthrow the foundation of both (4).

II. (5) The infidelity of the GENTILE world, and more especially of the men of rank and learning, is resolvable into the principle of contempt prior to examination. The state of religion amongst the Greeks and Romans had a natural tendency to induce this disposition. Dionysius Halicarnassensis remarks that there were six hundred different kinds of religions or sacred rites exercised at Rome: and these were all regarded by the superior classes as fables. Can we wonder then that Christianity, which mixed with no politics, produced no fine writers, and contained no curious speculations, was included in the number, without inquiry into the particular grounds of its pretensions? When it did reach their knowledge, it must have appeared to them a very strange system: the Redeemer and destined Judge of the human race, a poor young man crucified at Jerusalem with two thieves! The doctrinal terms of the religion, moreover, would sound barbarous and unintelligible: what knew they of grace, of redemption, of justification, of the blood of Christ shed for the sins of men, of reconcilement, of mediation (5)?

(6) Christianity was also presented to the minds of the learned Heathen under additional disadvantage, by reason of its real, and still more of its nominal, connexion with Judaism. They regarded Jehovah himself as only the idol of the Jewish nation: nay, the Jews were particularly ridiculed for being a credulous race, so that whatever reports of a miraculous nature proceeded from Judea were looked upon by the Heathen world as false and frivolous. When they heard of Christianity, they viewed it as a quarrel among the Jews about some articles of their own superstition. It was not probable, therefore, that they would enter with any degree of attention into the detail of such disputes, or even trouble themselves to look into the Christian writings (6) [a].

[a] *Tacitus, in a professed discourse upon the history of the Jews, states that they worshipped the effigy of an ass; and the same thing is confidently repeated by Plutarch.* This shews how little the learned Heathens knew, and *with what carelessness they judged, of these matters.*

(7) The strong prejudice which men of rank and learning universally entertain against any thing that *originates* with the vulgar and illiterate, would strengthen the considerations above-mentioned (7).

(8) The name and character comprehended in the two words "exitiabilis superstitio," (a pernicious superstition) which Tacitus has given to Christianity, and by which he disposes of the whole question of the merits or demerits thereof, afford a strong proof how little he knew, or concerned himself to know, about the matter. Read the instructions which stand in one entire passage of the Epistle* written by St. Paul a few years previously, to those very Roman converts of whom Tacitus speaks; and then think of "*exitiabilis superstitio!!*" or, see what Pliny could find to blame in this pernicious superstition, when he was led by his office to institute something like an examination into the principles and conduct of the sect. He discovered nothing but that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves a hymn to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by an oath not to be guilty of theft, robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it.

Upon the words of Tacitus, we may build the following observations:

First, that we are well warranted in calling the view under which learned men of that age beheld Christianity, an obscure and distant view. Had Tacitus known more of Christianity, though he might have rejected it, he would have described it differently. But holding it in too much contempt to inquire into its precepts, duties, constitution, or design, he naturally characterised it as a "superstition," because the Christians worshipped a person unknown to the Roman calendar, and as "pernicious," because it was opposed to the established Polytheism.

Secondly, we may from hence remark, how little reliance can be placed upon the most acute judgments, in

* See Rom. xii. 9. to xiii. 13.

subjects which they despise without any previous examination.

Thirdly, that this contempt, prior to examination, is an intellectual vice from which men of the greatest faculties of mind are not free. Probably, indeed, such men are the most subject to it. Looking down upon the follies of the world from the eminence on which they feel themselves seated, they behold contending tenets idly wasting their strength upon one another, with the common disdain of the absurdity of them all.

Fourthly, we need not be surprised at many writers of that age not mentioning Christianity at all, when they who did mention it, entirely misconceiving its nature and character, regarded it with negligence and contempt (8).

(9) The cause above assigned for the rejection of Christianity by men of rank and learning among the Heathens, namely, a strong antecedent contempt, accounts also for their silence concerning it. If they had rejected it upon examination, they would have given their reasons: whereas what men repudiate from prejudice or settled contempt, they do not write books about, or notice much in what they do write upon other subjects. Thus from the letters of Pliny the younger to Trajan, we learn that though he (Pliny) had made some political inquiries about the matter, yet of its doctrines, its evidences, or its books, he had not taken the trouble to inform himself with any degree of care or correctness. Regarding the whole truth, further than as it seemed to concern his administration, with negligence and disdain, we find that in more than two hundred and forty letters of his which are now extant, except in the two above referred to, the subject is never mentioned. If these two letters had been lost, with what confidence, but with how little truth[a], would the obscurity of the Christian religion have been argued from Pliny's silence (9).

(10) It is probable that the Heathen public, especially the men of rank and education, were divided into two classes—those who despised Christianity beforehand, and those who *received it*. In correspondency with this division of cha-

[a] See page 124, *supra*.

racter, the writers of that age would, for the most part, be also of two classes—those who were silent about Christianity, and those who were Christians [10].

As a second reason for the infidelity of the Gentile world, it may be added, that [11] there is sufficient proof that the notion of magic was resorted to by the Heathen adversaries of Christianity, in like manner as that of diabolical agency had before been by the Jews. Justin Martyr alleges this as his reason for arguing from prophecy rather than from miracles. Origen imputes the evasion to Celsus, Jerome to Porphyry, and Lactantius to the Heathen in general [11].

CHAPTER V.

That the Christian Miracles are not recited or appealed to by early Christian writers themselves, so fully or frequently as might have been expected.

THIS objection may be considered, first, as it applies to THE APOSTOLIC EPISTLES; and secondly, as it applies to OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS.

I. As it respects the apostolic epistles, [1] two answers may be given to the objection:

First, they are either hortatory or argumentative. In the former, there appears to be no place or occasion for more frequent references to miracles than we actually find. And the unfrequency of these allusions in the latter is accounted for by the consideration, that the miraculous history was all along *presupposed;* and the points under discussion were those of which the miracles were not decisive; namely, the nature of our Lord's person or power, and the design and effects of his advent.

Secondly, as it is unwarrantable to conclude that the omission or unfrequency of circumstantial recitals of miracles *in the apostolic speeches*, is a proof of the non-existence

of the miracles, when the speeches are given by St. Luke in immediate conjunction with the history of these miracles; so neither can any such conclusion be drawn from *letters*, which, in this respect, are only similar to the speeches[a] (1).

II. The general observation which has been made upon the apostolic letters, namely, that (2) the subject which they treated did not lead them to any direct recital of the Christian history, belongs also to the writings of the apostolic fathers; though even by these the great points of it are fully recognised (2).

To the ANCIENT APOLOGISTS, however, whose design was to defend Christianity, the above observation does not apply.

The most ancient apologist, of whose works we have the smallest knowledge, is QUADRATUS, who lived about seventy years after the ascension, and presented his apology to the emperor Adrian. Eusebius has preserved the following passage of this work: "The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real: both they that were healed, and they that were raised from the dead, were seen, not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterwards."

JUSTIN MARTYR, about thirty years afterwards, asserts the performance of miracles by our Lord; and, indeed, has touched upon passages of Christ's life in so many places, that a tolerably complete account of it might be collected from his works.

TERTULLIAN asserts that Christ cast out devils—gave sight to the blind—healed the leprous, and the paralytic—raised the dead—stilled the raging of the elements—walked upon the seas.

ORIGEN refers to Christ's healing the blind, the lame, and the diseased—feeding multitudes with a few loaves—restoring to life Jairus's daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus.

It appears, therefore, that (3) the miracles of our Lord

[a] See Paley's Evidences.

were positively and specifically asserted and appealed to by the apologists for Christianity. If it is with sparingness, let it be remembered that as many of that age held that the miracles were performed by magical art, the ancient Christian advocates thought it necessary to argue rather from prophecy and other topics: and therefore, if that sparingness furnishes an objection at all, it is an objection, not to the truth of the history, but to the judgment of its defenders (3).

CHAPTER VI.

Want of universality in the knowledge and reception of Christianity, and of greater clearness in the evidence.

(1) OF a revelation which really came from God, the proof, it has been said, would in all ages be so public and manifest, that no part of the human species would remain ignorant of it, no understanding could fail of being convinced by it (1).

The advocates of Christianity do not deny that we can conceive that the Almighty *could* have communicated a higher degree of assurance, and have given to his communication a stronger and more extensive influence. (2) The question, therefore, is not, whether Christianity possesses the highest possible degree of evidence; but, whether the not having more evidence, is a sufficient reason for rejecting that which we have (2). The following observations will shew that it is not:

I. (3) There appears to be no fairer method of judging of Christianity, than by comparing it with other things which are acknowledged to come from God. If it labors under no defects but what apparently belong to other dispensations, these seeming defects do not justify us in setting aside the proofs which are offered of its divine *origin, if they* are otherwise entitled to credit.

(a) Throughout that order, then, of nature, of which

God is the Author, what we find is a system of *beneficence*, but seldom or never of *optimism;* for there are few cases in which, if we permit ourselves to range in possibilities, we cannot suppose something more perfect, or more unobjectionable, than what we see. For instance, much of the rain falls upon the sea, where it can be of no use; and, on the other hand, it is often wanted where it would be of the greatest service. We could imagine the matter to be otherwise regulated. Yet does the inferiority of the real case to the one we could imagine, authorize us to say that the present disposition of the atmosphere is not among the productions of the Deity? Now between the works of nature and Christianity, there is this similitude; they each bear strong marks of their original; they each also bear *appearances* of irregularity and defect. A system of strict optimism may nevertheless be the system in both cases. The proof, however, is hidden from *us;* and we ought not expect to perceive *that* in revelation which we hardly perceive in any thing: that beneficence of which we *can* judge, ought to satisfy us; that optimism of which we *cannot* judge, ought not to be sought after (*a*).

(*β*) If Christianity be compared with the state and progress of natural religion, the argument of the objector will gain nothing by the comparison. Does the savage, who knows nothing of Christianity, know more of the principles of deism and morality? Yet these, notwithstanding his ignorance of them, are neither untrue, nor unimportant, nor uncertain. Can it be argued that God does not exist, because that if he did, he would discover himself to mankind by proofs which no inadvertency could miss, no prejudice withstand?

And if Christianity be regarded as a providential instrument for the melioration of mankind, its progress and diffusion resembles that of other causes by which human life is improved (*β*) [3].

II. [4] Though we know not what would be the real effect of that overpowering evidence which our adversaries *require, yet some* consequences would probably attend it, *which do not seem* to befit a divine revelation:

1. (γ) Irresistible proof would not answer the purpose of trial and probation, and would confound all characters and all dispositions. Thus,

First, It would call for no exercise of candour, humility, inquiry; no submission of passions, interests, and prejudices, to probable truth; no habits of reflection; none of that previous desire to learn and to obey the will of God, which forms perhaps the test of the virtuous principle.

Secondly, This kind of proof would leave no place for the admission of *internal evidence*, which ought perhaps to bear a considerable part in the truth of every revelation, because it is a species of evidence which applies itself to the knowledge, love, and practice of virtue, and which operates in proportion to the degree of those qualities which it finds in the person whom it addresses.

Hence irresistible evidence seems calculated to subvert rather than promote the true purpose of the divine councils, which is, not to produce by a force little short of mechanical constraint, an obedience that could not be be called virtue; but to treat moral agents agreeably to what they are, by imparting light and motives, of such kinds, and in such measures, that the influence of them depends upon the recipients themselves (γ).

2. (δ) It may be asked, whether the perfect display of a future state of existence would be compatible with the activity of civil life, and with the success of human affairs? We read that the first Christians sold their possessions and goods, and had all things common. This was extremely natural when miraculous evidence came in full force upon the senses of mankind: but it may be fairly doubted whether, if this state of mind had been universal or long continued, agriculture, manufactures, trade, and navigation, would have flourished, or have been exercised at all. It is at least worthy of remark, that St. Paul found it necessary frequently to recall his converts to the ordinary labors and domestic duties of their condition[a] (δ) (4).

[a] It may be added, that as there are classes above us of rational intelligences; *one of their distinguishing privileges may be to enjoy clearer manifestations than those which belong to us.*

CHAPTER VII.

The supposed Effects of Christianity.

STRANGE as it may appear,[1] there have been many who have contended that a religion, which, under every form in which it is taught, holds forth the final reward of the virtuous and the final punishment of the wicked, and confessedly proposes just distinctions of virtue and vice, produces a bad rather than a good effect upon public happiness [1].

In the conclusions which the writers who hold this paradox draw from what they call experience, two sources of mistake may be perceived.

I. [2] They look for the influence of religion in the wrong place.

II. They charge Christianity with many consequences for which it is not responsible [2].

I. [3] The influence of religion is not to be sought for in the councils of princes, in the debates or resolutions of popular assemblies, in the conduct of governments towards their subjects, or of states and sovereigns towards one another, of conquerors at the head of their armies, or of parties intriguing for power at home; topics which almost solely fill the pages of history. It must be perceived, if at all, in the silent course of private and domestic life. But, even there, its influence may not be very obvious. That which is the substance of the religion, its hopes and consolations, its intermixture with the thoughts by day and by night, the devotion of the heart, the control of appetite, the steady direction of the will to the commands of God, is necessarily invisible. Religion therefore operates most upon those of whom history knows the least: and hence, upon the subject of religion, history is peculiarly defective and fallacious [3].

[4] Christianity can act upon public usages and institutions repugnant to its principles, only through private *character. To* effect their removal, the reigning part of *the community* must act, and act together. But it may be

long before the persons who compose this body, be sufficiently imbued with the Christian character, to suppress what they and the public have been reconciled to by habit and interest[4]. Nevertheless the effects of Christianity, even in this view, have been important. [5] It has mitigated the conduct of war and the treatment of captives; softened the administration of despotic governments; abolished polygamy, and restrained the licentiousness of divorces; put an end to the exposure of children, the immolation of slaves, the combats of gladiators[a], and the impurities of religious rites; banished unnatural vices, or at least the toleration of them; greatly meliorated the condition of the laboring part of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest; produced numerous establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty, and, in some countries, a regular and general provision by law; and triumphed over the slavery established in the Roman empire, and the worse slavery of the West Indies. Bardasenes, who lived as early as the second century, has borne testimony to the efficacy of Christianity in abolishing wicked practices, though established by law and by public usage: "Neither in Parthia do the Christians, though Parthians, use polygamy; nor in Persia, though Persians, do they marry their own daughters; nor among the Bactri or Galli do they violate the sanctity of marriage; nor wherever they are, do they suffer themselves to be overcome by ill constituted laws and manners." Contrast all this with the results of heathen philosophy. Socrates did not destroy the idolatry of Athens, or produce the slightest revolution in the manners of his countrymen[5].

Again, [6] Christianity, in every country in which it is professed, hath obtained a sensible influence upon the public judgment of morals. And this is very important. For, without some fixed standard of morality, into what extravagances might public opinion wander! Probably many who are not Christians themselves, may be guided by the recti-

[a] Lipsius affirms (Sat. b. I. c. 12.) that the gladiatorial shows sometimes *cost Europe 20 or 30,000* lives in a month, and that even the women were *passionately fond of them.*

tude which Christianity communicates to public opinion [6]. But, to recur to our original position, we ought to look more especially to the *direct but secret* influence of Christianity upon *private individuals*. Millions and millions, whose names were never heard of, have been made better by it, not only in their conduct, but in their dispositions; and happier, not so much in their external circumstances as in that which alone deserves the name of happiness, the tranquillity and consolation of their thoughts.

Yet, [7] after all, the value of Christianity is not to be appreciated by its *temporal* effects. There may also be great consequences of it not belonging to it as a revelation. The effects upon human salvation, of the mission, death, and agency of Christ, may be universal, though the religion be not universally known [7].

II. Christianity is charged with many consequences for which it is not responsible. [8] The fact of persecution has been exaggerated: probably the slave trade destroyed more in a year than the Inquisition has done since its foundation. But even if it were not so, Christianity is answerable for no part of the mischief occasioned by persecution. Nine-tenths of the intolerant and persecuting laws which have been established upon the subject of religion, are resolvable into the principle, that they who are in possession of power, do what they can to keep it. Those who are called *conscientious* persecutors, have probably never been either numerous or powerful: and even *their* mistake cannot be fairly imputed to Christianity. They have been misled by an error in their moral philosophy. Had there been in the New Testament precepts authorising coercion in the propagation of the religion, the case would have been different [8].

[9] If it be objected that Christianity is chargeable with every mischief of which it has been the *occasion*, though not the motive; we may reply, that if the malevolent passions exist, the world will never want occasions. Did the applauded *inter-community* of the Pagan theology preserve the peace *of the Roman* world? did it prevent oppressions, proscrip-

tions, massacres, devastations? Was it bigotry that carried Alexander into the East, or brought Cæsar into Gaul? Are the Heathen nations free from ruinous and sanguinary contentions? Is it owing to Christianity, or to the want of it, that the naturally fine provinces of the Turkish empire are a desert? Were the dreadful calamities which afflicted the Continent under the French Republic, effected by the votaries of our religion, or by the foes (9)?

(10) With respect to differences of opinion, it may be observed, that if we possessed the disposition which Christianity labors to inculcate, above all other qualities, these would do little harm. If that disposition is wanting, other causes, even were these absent, would continually arise to call forth the malevolent passions. Such differences, when accompanied with mutual charity, which Christianity forbids us to violate, are for the most part innocent, and for some purposes useful. They promote inquiry, discussion, knowledge. They help to keep up an attention to religious subjects, and a concern about them, which might otherwise die away (10).

CHAPTER VIII.

The Conclusion.

(1) IN religion, as in every other subject of human reasoning, much depends upon the *order* in which we dispose our inquiries. The doctrines of Christianity necessarily come to us, in the course of our early education, before the proofs, and with that mixture of explications and inferences from which no public creed is or can be free. Hence, when any articles which appear as parts of it contradict the apprehensions of men of rash and confident tempers, they reject the religion altogether. But the rational way of treating such a subject, is, first to attend only to the general and substantial truth of its principles. When once we perceive and feel a foundation, we shall proceed with safety to inquire into other points.

This conduct of the understanding will uphold personal Christianity, even where the religion is established under the most objectionable forms, and notwithstanding the controversies amongst its professors. What is clear in Christianity, is sufficient and infinitely valuable; what is dubious, is unnecessary to be decided, or of very subordinate importance; and what is most obscure, will teach us to bear with the opinions of others upon the subject in which the obscurity exists[a]. And if numerous controversies divide the Christian world, we should remember that few or none of them affect or relate to the proofs of our religion.

A judgment once satisfied of the general truth of the religion, will moreover admit articles of faith which are attended with difficulty of apprehension, if they appear to be truly parts of the revelation. For, what relates to the invisible world might have been expected to contain some points remote from the comprehension of a mind which has acquired all its ideas from sense and experience.

The truth of Christianity depends solely upon its leading facts. Of these we have evidence which ought to satisfy us. The changing of the religion of the world by a Jewish Peasant, unaided by one favorable circumstance, unless of a supernatural character, and the conduct of his followers, are facts uncontested and incontestible, to which there is nothing similar in the history of the human species, and which cannot be accounted for upon any reasonable supposition, except that of the truth of the mission. These facts alone lay a foundation for our faith. But we have, moreover, a very great weight of evidence to establish the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures, and the truth of the details therein contained (1).

(2) We may therefore assert, that for a purpose of inestimable value, namely, to afford an adequate assurance of a general resurrection, and a day of account and retribution; to furnish mankind with precepts of morality, calculated to

[a] Augustine said to the worst heretics of his age: "Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniatur, et quam difficile caveantur errores —qui nesciunt cum quantâ difficultate sanetur oculus interioris hominis—qui *nesciunt quibus suspiriis* et gemitibus fiat ut ex quantulacunque parte possit *intelligi Deus.*"

prepare them for that awful occasion, and truly to promote their temporal happiness; it hath pleased the Deity to vouchsafe a revelation, evidenced by miraculous attestations. Having given this supernatural proof, when this alone could give Christianity a beginning, he has left the institution to progress by natural means, according to laws, which, disposed and controlled by the inscrutable influence of his providence, regulate this particular subject in common with many others.

It was necessary, especially for the purpose of overcoming the shock which the imagination receives from the appearance and effects of death, thus to communicate a higher degree of assurance than that which is derived from the light of nature. Nevertheless reason itself suggests, that in the counsels of a Being possessed of the power and disposition which the Creator of the universe must possess, it is not improbable that there should be a future state, or that we should be acquainted with it. And as to the difficulty of comprehending the resurrection of the dead, the propagation of the species, when abstractedly considered, is equally incomprehensible.

Mental qualities cannot inhere in matter. If any one, however, finds it too great a strain upon his thoughts to admit the notion of a substance strictly immaterial, that is, from which extension and solidity are excluded, he can find no difficulty in allowing that a particle as small as a particle of light, minuter than all conceivable dimensions, may just as easily be the depositary and the organ of consciousness as the human brain; and that being so, it may be safe amidst the destruction of its integuments, and may transfor a proper identity to whatever shall hereafter be united to it. If the mode and means of all this is imperceptible by our senses, so are gravitation, electricity, and magnetism, though constantly exerting their influence within us, near us, and around us. The Supreme Intelligence is so himself.

But, whether the imagination, which is the mere slave of habit, can be satisfied about the nature of the soul and *the resurrection* of the body, or not; when nothing can

vindicate the divine attributes but the supposition that mankind are destined to exist in a future state, wherein their happiness or misery will depend upon their conduct in the present world, and that such their destination either hath been or will be revealed unto them; and when a strong body of evidence gives us just reasons to believe that such a revelation hath already been made—we ought to set our minds at rest with the assurance, that in the resources of Creative Wisdom, expedients cannot be wanted to carry into effect what the Deity hath purposed[2].

A

BRIEF SUMMARY

OF THE

EVIDENCES CONTAINED IN THE FIRST TWO PARTS OF THE FOREGOING WORK.

I. MANY of the immediate followers of Christ voluntarily passed their lives in great labors, dangers, and sufferings, and entered upon a new and singular course of life, in attestation of, and solely in consequence of their belief in, the miraculous history contained in our Scriptures[a]: and to this there is nothing similar in the annals of mankind[b]. From the conduct of these men, we may safely conclude that the miracles recorded in the New Testament, were actually performed; and consequently that the religion of Jesus Christ is of divine authority. Those who bore testimony to the Christian miracles could not be deceivers. Would men pretend to have seen what they never saw; assert facts of which they had no knowledge; go about lying, to teach virtue; and though they were not only convinced of Christ's being an impostor, but had seen the success of his imposture in his crucifixion, yet persist in carrying on that imposture, and thus bring upon themselves, for nothing, and with a full knowledge of the consequence, hatred and contumely, labors and sufferings, dangers and death?

[a] *Part I. Prop. I.* [b] Part I. Prop. II.

II. In the Old Testament, which comes out of the custody of the Jews, the adversaries of Christianity, there are various prophecies which apply in a very remarkable manner to Jesus Christ, and to no other person whatever[a].

III. Three of the Gospels contain a prediction by Christ of the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation. That the words of this prediction were written before the occurrence of the events predicted, is very evident from various considerations: and their minute fulfilment, thirty-six years after the death of Christ, has been clearly made out[a]. Now it is incumbent upon us to account for this circumstance: but it is impossible to do so except by admitting that Christ was in fact what he declared himself to be.

IV. Remembering that the teaching of morality was not the primary design of Christ's mission, and that morality cannot be a subject of discovery, when we consider his preference of solid to popular virtue, of a character commonly despised to a character universally extolled; his regulation of the thoughts, his collecting human duty into two well-devised rules, his exclusion of all regard to reputation as a motive to good deeds; his instructing in a manner exactly suited to his character and situation; the great beauty and excellence of his parables and form of prayer; his silence respecting the particulars of a future state; his enjoining no austerities; his unimpassioned devotion; his sincerity and judgment in not substituting fervency and forwardness in his cause for general and regular morality; his not falling in with the depraved fashions of his country, or with the natural bias of his own education, yet not decrying positive distinctions or external observances; his freedom from the sophistry and frivolous subtilties for which the Jewish teachers were remarkable; his unnational liberality and benevolence; and the absence, in his religion, of all views of civil or ecclesiastical policy; and when we reflect *that he was only,* in external appearance, a carpenter's son,

[a] Part II. Chap. I.

who had lived in an obscure province of Palestine until he produced himself in his public character; and that he had received nothing to form in him a taste or judgment different from that of his countrymen, and of persons of his own rank; when we review all these circumstances, how can we reasonably avoid acknowledging that he was in truth a teacher sent from God? If we admit the reality of his mission, there is no room for surprise at the qualities observable in his religion: but if we do not, their existence cannot be accounted for[a].

V. Many circumstances are noticed in the Gospels which no writer would have forged, and which no writer would have noticed who had been careful to present the Christian history in the most unexceptionable form. And "no remarks are thrown in to anticipate objections; nothing of that caution which never fails to distinguish the testimony of those who are conscious of imposture; no endeavour to reconcile the reader's mind to what may be extraordinary in the narrative." On the other hand, the extreme *naturalness* of some of the things related, is very observable[b].

VI. Although actions and discourses are ascribed to Christ by St. John, very different in general from those recorded by the other evangelists, yet there is an identity of character, which, as it cannot be supposed that such men as the evangelists *studied* uniformity of character, or indeed ever thought of any such thing, indicates that the actions and discourses proceeded from the same real person[c].

VII. All the Jews understood their prophecies to foretel the advent of a person by whom their nation and institution would be transcendantly exalted; and they accordingly looked for that advent with the most anxious desire. Jesus gave himself out to be the person intended by these predictions. But had he been either an enthusiast or an impostor, he would also have assumed the character to which they were universally supposed to relate. There

[a] *Part II. Chap. II.* [b] Part II. Chap. III. [c] Part II. Chap. IV.

were many pretended Messiahs, and all of these *did* assume this character[a]. Jesus, however, not only did not pretend to be a temporal deliverer and sovereign, but he "took upon him the form of a servant[b];" he promulgated a religion, the doctrines of which were novel, surprising, and mortifying to the Jews, in the highest degree[c]; he predicted[d] the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation.

VIII. Between the facts occasionally mentioned or referred to in Scripture, and the state of things in the times to which it relates, as represented by foreign and independent accounts, there is a conformity in a great number of particulars[e]; and this appears the more remarkable from the consideration that it is sometimes seen in minute, recondite, and very peculiar circumstances; that a writer *unacquainted* with the circumstances *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, would find it difficult to give correct detailed accounts of transactions connected with those circumstances; and that there appears, in the writers of the New Testament, a knowledge of the affairs of those times which we do not find in authors of later ages[f]. This conformity, therefore, may be said to carry the evangelical histories up to the age of their reputed authors; to an age in which it would have been difficult to have imposed forgeries in their names upon the Christian public, and in which there is no evidence that any forgeries were attempted. Hence it is very little short of proving the absolute genuineness of the writings[g]. And it is also a strong proof of their veracity. For, can it be for a moment supposed that the authors of the historical books of the New Testament, whoever they were, would have put forth circumstantial accounts of the raising of the dead; of the instantaneous and perfect cure of the blind, the dumb, and the lame; and of the performance of many other miracles of the

[a] Part II. Chap. v. [b] Phil. ii. 7. [c] Page 6.
[d] This point is not noticed by Dr. Paley. but it is well put in Bishop J. B. *Sumner's Internal* Evidences.
[e] *Part II. Chap.* VI. [f] Page 115. [g] Part II. Chap. VI.

most wonderful and unequivocal character, by Jesus Christ, *within the recollection of those around them*, in the presence of multitudes, and in the face of enemies, in the synagogues, the streets, and the highways of the cities and villages of Judea and Galilee, when in fact no such miracles had ever been wrought[a]?

IX. Between the letters which bear the name of St. Paul and his history in the Acts[b], and between the several Gospels as compared with each other[c], there are many coincidences. These prove both the genuineness of the writings, and the truth of the narrative; for their undesignedness demonstrates that they were not produced by contrivance, and they are too close and numerous to be accounted for by supposing them to be accidental concurrences of fiction.

X. We have abundant proof that the apostles and first teachers of our religion asserted the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now this is sufficient to establish the truth of the resurrection, since it may be shewn that it is incredible either that the apostles knowingly published a falsehood, or that they were themselves deceived[d].

XI. From the propagation of Christianity, it is very evident that miracles must have been wrought by the Founder and the first teachers thereof. Without force, without power, without support, without one external circumstance of attraction or influence, Jesus, personally or by his apostles, prevailed against the prejudices, the learning, the hierarchy of his country; against the ancient religious opinions, the pompous sacred rites, the philosophy, the wisdom, the authority of the Roman empire, in the most polished and enlightened period of its existence; per-

[a] This argument is not in Dr. Paley's work. His reasoning upon the agreement between Sacred and Profane writers does not appear to be sufficiently extended.

[b] Part II. Chap. VII.

[c] *Page 101.* And see the Rev. J. J. Blunt's "Veracity of the Gospels."

[d] Part II. Chap. VIII.

suading many nations to quit the religion in which their ancestors had lived and died; causing them to forsake and despise the deities which they had been accustomed to reverence and worship; and introducing a wonderful change in their moral conduct and character. The propagation of Christianity is an *unique* in the history of mankind. A Jewish Peasant overthrew the religion of the world[a].

Surely such a body of evidence must be abundantly sufficient to convince every candid inquirer that the Christian religion is most certainly true.

And what conclusion or what fact is there, in the whole range of human knowledge, which, in point of importance, can for one moment be compared with this? Does it not then become us to pause awhile, ere we dismiss it from our minds? As reasonable beings, shall we not do well to consider whether our assurance of the truth of the Christian religion is a practical and operative, or only a mere historic, speculative, and inert faith? So great is the weight of evidence, that we cannot refuse a mere assent to the truths of the Bible. But it can scarcely be supposed by any, that an otiose assent is the end and aim of Christian evidence, or that a barren conviction is the essence of the Christian religion. The momentous question should be solemnly considered by every reflecting mind: Do I really receive Christ with the heart, as my Lord and Saviour, so as to strive unreservedly to live according to his will, from love and gratitude, knowing that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," and yet so as to rest my hope of salvation entirely on his merits, knowing my own inability to atone for the past or perfectly to obey for the future? This, and this alone, is justifying, saving faith: this, and this alone, is the true end and aim of the evidences of Christianity. Any other than this "faith, which *worketh* by love," is as valueless as the faith of devils, who "believe and tremble," but are not saved[b].

[a] Part II. Chap. IX.

[b] *Compare John i. 12*; Matt. vii. 21; Gal. v. 4—6, and vi. 15; Rom. iii. *20—28; James i. 22*, and ii. 14—26. And see Articles of Religion, Articles XI. *and XII; and Homily III.*, Parts 1 and 3, and Homily IV., Parts 1 and 2.

Besides the countless blessings of providence, "we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Has this infinite love called forth corresponding feelings of gratitude on our part? Do we feel with St. Paul,—"the love of Christ *constraineth* us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, *that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again?*"

If the contemplation of the mercies of God has led us to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our *reasonable* service," then, when Christ shall come again with power and great glory, we shall be able to join in the exclamation, "*Lo! this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will love us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation!*"

But, on the other hand, if our faith has been a mere speculative, barren assent or opinion, it will only serve to augment our guilt, and increase our terror, in that awful day. To what other end, in that case, shall we have examined the evidences of the Christian religion, except it be this—to divest ourselves of every excuse, and to seal our doom?—"*What shall we do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall we answer him?*"

M

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS,

CONNECTED,

BY MEANS OF FIGURES AND LETTERS,

WITH THE ANSWERS THERETO IN THE EPITOME;

BUT ALSO ADAPTED

TO THE ORIGINAL WORK OF DR. PALEY.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

(1) WHY does it appear unnecessary to prove that mankind stood in need of a revelation? p. 1.

(2) Why may the question concerning Christianity be said to lie between our religion and none? p. 1.

Show the antecedent credibility of miracles, and expose the fallacy of Hume's reasoning. pp. 1—4.

(3) How does Paley show the erroneousness of Hume's prejudication prior to an examination of the principle upon which it is founded?—Or, how does he maintain the assertion, that in miracles adduced in support of a revelation, there is not any such antecedent improbability as no testimony can surmount? pp. 1, 2.

(α) Upon what suppositions does it appear not improbable, or at least not incredible, that a revelation should be made? p. 1.

(β) Why is the improbability that miracles should be wrought in promulgating a revelation, not greater than the improbability that such revelation should be imparted by God? p. 1.

(γ) To what length of prejudication does a modern objection to miracles go? p. 2.

(4) State the principle upon which Hume's objection to miracles is founded, and expose its fallacy. p. 2.

(δ) To what may the improbability which arises from the want of experience be said to be equal?—Or, what is the converse and the measure of the improbability which arises from the want of experience? p. 2.

(ε) Allowing that miracles were originally wrought to give Christianity a beginning, is it probable that miracles would be repeated so as to become the objects of general experience? p. 2.

(5) State the presumption, upon which the force of experience, as an objection to miracles, is founded, and show the erroneousness thereof? p. 3.

(ζ) Prove that the want of experience, in relation to miracles, should be matter neither of surprise nor objection. p. 3.

(6) State and answer the objection which is advanced as a continuation of the argument from experience?—Or, state and answer the objection which is urged against the means used in the performance of miracles? p. 3.

(7) What does Hume state the case of miracles to be? p. 3.

(8) Point out the want of argumentative justice displayed by Hume. pp. 3, 4.

(9) By what short practical consideration may one be convinced of the fallacy of Hume's conclusion?—Or, give the simple case upon which Paley proceeds with what may be called Hume's theorem. p. 4.

PART I.

WHAT are the two main Propositions proved in the First Part of the Evidences? pp. 5, 65. [The construction of the second is altered.—See Preface.]

PROPOSITION I.

What two points are necessary to be made out in order to support this proposition?—Or, what two points must be established in order to prove that the original witnesses of the Christian miracles acted the part which is usually imputed to them? p. 5.

CHAPTER I.

(1) What is meant by arguments drawn from the nature of the case? p. 5.

Give an accurate sketch of the evidence of the activity, perils, and altered life of the first propagators of Christianity, from the nature of the case. pp. 5—10.

(2) What reason have we to conclude, from the nature of the case, that the Founder of Christianity and his immediate followers must have been active in promulgating the Gospel? p. 6.

(3) What observation does Paley make upon the mode of life which we may reasonably suppose that the first preachers of Christianity adopted? p. 6.

(4) What treatment would the original teachers of our religion be likely to experience in Judea? pp. 6, 7.

(α) Show that Christianity was adverse to the opinions of the Jews, upon which even their hopes, their partialities, their pride, their consolation was founded. p. 6.

(β) Give a reason why the Jewish rulers in particular would not view the conduct of Christ's followers with indifference. p. 7.

(γ) Why would Christianity be suspected and discouraged by the Roman Government in Judea? p. 7.

(5) What treatment would the messengers of the Cross be *likely to meet* with in the heathen world? pp. 7—9.

(δ) May it not be inferred from the polytheism of the ancients, that they would readily tolerate Christianity? p. 7.

(ε) Why was it more dangerous for the first preachers of Christianity to promulgate the doctrines of the Gospel, than for the philosophers to express their doubts or disbelief in the popular theology? p. 7.

(ζ) Show that the propagation of Christianity among the heathen would be attended with danger, even without the denouncement of a general persecution. p. 8.

(η) Would the immediate followers of Jesus find protection in the general disbelief of the popular theology which prevailed among the intelligent part of the heathen public? p. 8.

(θ) Quote Gibbon's account of the matter, and prove from thence, that the Christian missionaries could look for no protection or impunity when they turned to the heathen. p. 9.

(6) May we not infer, from the nature of the case, that the original teachers of our religion, in consequence of their new profession, entered on a new and singular course of life? p. 9.

(7) What general inferences respecting the first preachers of the Gospel may be drawn from the very nature and exigency of the case? p. 10.

CHAPTER II.

(1) Why is the evidence afforded by heathen writers peculiarly valuable? p. 10.

What is the evidence incidentally afforded by heathen writers respecting the activity and sufferings of the first teachers of Christianity? pp. 10—12.

(2) What is the date and substance of the passage in Tacitus, the three things proved by it, and the inferences deducible therefrom? pp. 10, 11.

(3) What general inference may be drawn from the testimonies of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Juvenal? p. 11.

(4) What is the date of Pliny's testimony; to what two points does it principally relate; and how is the second of these further confirmed? p. 11.

(5) Give the testimonies of Martial, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. p. 12.

(a) What other point is established by the writings of Pliny and Martial, besides the sufferings of the Christians? p. 12.

CHAPTER III.

(1) Why does Paley remark the variety of form in which the sufferings of the witnesses of the Gospel history are attested in our Scriptures? p. 13.

State the conclusion which may be suggested, preparatory to more direct testimony, respecting the sufferings of the Christian teachers.—Or, give the *indirect* evidence of their sufferings, from the Scriptures, and other ancient Christian writings. p. 12—14.

(2) In what way does the concurrent testimony of our books and of Tacitus indirectly give us every reason to believe that the first Christians must have experienced persecution? p. 13.

(3) Quote our Lord's predictions respecting the persecution of his followers, and state what we are entitled to argue from them. p. 13.

(4) Quote some passages of the New Testament, containing exhortations to patience and consolations under distress, and state the argument grounded thereon. p. 13.

CHAPTER IV.

Give a brief sketch of the *direct* evidence of the exertions and sufferings of the first preachers of the Gospel, from the Scriptures and other ancient Christian writings. pp. 14—18.

(1) In what way have the Evangelists described the treatment of the Christian religion, and the exertions of its first preachers; and what observation may we make upon their mode of description? p. 14.

(2) Write a short account of what the first teachers did and suffered up to the time when the Scripture narrative proceeds with the separate memoirs of St. Paul. pp. 14—16.

(α) Why did not the Jewish rulers proceed to greater extremities in the first instance? p. 15.

(β) By what means were the common people induced to join in persecuting the Christians? p. 15.

(γ) What important conversion took place at the time of the first persecution? p. 15.

(δ) When was there a cessation of the first persecution, and to what may it be ascribed? p. 15.

(ε) What was the conduct of the original preachers within this period of quietness? p. 15.

(ζ) How was this tranquillity interrupted? p. 16.

(3) Is there not room to suspect that the Evangelist has magnified the fortitude or the sufferings of his party? p. 16.

(4) Give a sketch of St. Paul's history from the time of his entering upon his first expedition, to his imprisonment at Rome.—Or, give an account of St. Paul's three journeys, and the treatment he subsequently met with. pp. 16, 17.

(5) Show in what way the narrative relative to St. Paul is supported by corroborating testimony; and add Paley's observation upon such corroboration. pp. 17, 18.

(6) Can any thing be gathered respecting the sufferings of the first converts, from the writings of the companions and immediate followers of the apostles? p. 18.

(7) Give an illustration of what a persecution was in the days of the primitive Christians. pp. 18, 19.

CHAPTER V.

Write down the substance of Paley's observations upon the history of which he gives an abstract in the fourth chapter. pp. 19—21.

(1) Show how far the information afforded by Scripture history concerning one particular apostle, extends to the rest.—Or, what inference may be drawn from St. Paul's history; and how is this inference confirmed? p. 19.

(2) Is it necessary that we should be satisfied respecting the miraculous part of the Scripture narrative, or the correctness of single passages, before we can believe that the original followers of Christ underwent great labors and sufferings in the execution of their commission? p. 20.

(3) By what consideration is the general reality of the apostolic history strongly confirmed.—Or, show that the apostolic history does no more than assign adequate causes, and describe natural consequences. p. 20.

(4) In what way do the Scriptures supply evidence that the primitive Christians assumed on conversion a new and peculiar course of life? p. 20.

(5) Give Pliny's testimony respecting the conduct of the Christians; state also what it proves, and show that it may be applied to the apostolic age. pp. 20, 21.

CHAPTER VI.

(1) What are the eight considerations which hardly leave us room to doubt, but that the associates and immediate followers of Christ passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings, in the prosecution of their undertaking? p. 21.

(2) Prove that the story related by the first preachers of Christianity must have been a miraculous story. p. 22.

(*a*) Prove that in whatever degree, or in whatever part, the religion was argumentative, when it came to the question, "Is Jesus the Messiah," nothing but the ascription of miracles could have supported his pretensions. p. 22.

(*β*) Show that it may be fairly inferred that the original story was miraculous, from the pretensions made by Christians of succeeding ages. p. 23.

CHAPTER VII.

(1) After proving that the first teachers of Christianity acted the part which Paley's first Proposition imputes to them, what is the next great question to which we must proceed in order to complete the proof of that Proposition? p. 23.

Prove, from general and indirect considerations, that the narrative contained in our Scriptures is the original story. pp. 23—28.

(2) Is there no trace or vestige of any other story than that we receive, either in heathen or Jewish writers? pp. 23, 24.

(α) Give a brief statement of the facts in the Christian history to which the heathen writers bear testimony. p. 23.

(β) What may be observed of the early heathen and Jewish writers in relation to the Christian history? p. 24.

(3) What is the testimony of Josephus, and at what period did he write? p. 24.

(4) What may be reasonably contended with respect to the passage in Josephus concerning Christ? pp. 24, 25.

(γ) Supposing that the passage in Josephus concerning Christ is not genuine, and that the silence of Josephus was designed, what probably was his reason for being silent? p. 25.

(5) What observation is true of all the ancient Christian writings? p. 26.

(6) Is the acknowledgment of the Gospel narrative by all the ancient Christian writers, a sufficient proof that it is the original story? p. 26.

(7) How does the identity of the Gospel history clearly appear from the practice of the Christian Church? p. 26.

(8) How does it appear, by the Gospels themselves, that the Christian community were acquainted with the narrative before they were written? pp. 26, 27.

(δ) What does St. Luke expressly affirm in his preface to the Gospel? pp. 26, 27.

(9) What four circumstances are sufficient to prove that the story we have now is in general the story the Christians had at the beginning? p. 27.

(10) What case should we be able to offer, if our evidence only proved that the story we have now is in the main the original story? p. 28.

CHAPTER VIII.

Show, from the authority of our Scriptures, that ours is the *original story,* even as to its details. pp. 28—33.

(1) After proving that the story we have now, is, in the main,

the story which the apostles published; to what point does Paley then proceed, and upon what does that point depend? p. 28.

(2) What observation is suggested by the situation of the received authors of the Gospels? p. 29.

(3) What was the situation of the received authors of the Gospels? p. 29.

(α) By what reflection may the force and value of the information furnished by the Evangelists be more clearly perceived? p. 29.

(4) Show that such was the situation of the authors to whom the four Gospels are ascribed, that if any one of the four is genuine, it is sufficient. pp. 29, 30.

(β) Show that the situation of the Evangelists applies to the *truth* of the facts they record. pp. 29, 30.

(5) If we must be considered as encountering a risk in assigning the authors of the Gospels, to what advantage are we entitled? p. 30.

(6) If it should appear that the Evangelists used each other's works, would this discovery greatly diminish their separate authority or their mutual confirmation? p. 30.

(7) How may we explain the parallelisms between the Gospel of St. Matthew and that of St. Luke; and what is the acknowledged character of St. John's Gospel? p. 30.

(8) Show that the New Testament contains a collection of proofs; that the written evidence is of such a kind, and comes to us in such a state, as the natural order and progress of things in the infancy of the institution might be expected to produce, and that their reception has been such as they would naturally meet with if genuine. pp. 31, 32.

(γ) "There is, in the Evangelic history, a cumulation of testimony which belongs hardly to any other history, but which our habitual mode of reading the Scriptures sometimes causes us to overlook." Illustrate this. pp. 31, 32.

(δ) Show that the writings of the New Testament, and the evidence concerning them, correspond with the natural progress of things in the infancy of the institution. p. 32.

(9) Why is the genuineness of the historical books of the New Testament a point of importance? p. 32.

(10) Show that it is not essentially necessary to establish the genuineness of the Gospels, in order to prove that they exhibit the story published by the first emissaries of Christianity. pp. 32, 33.

CHAPTER IX.

State Paley's preliminary reflections respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the historical Scriptures. pp. 33—36.

(1) What proof is there of the antiquity and wide circulation of the Scriptures? pp. 33, 34.

(2) Give Bentley's observation. p. 34.

(3) What peculiarity is there in the style and language of the writings of the New Testament; and what does this peculiarity prove? p. 34.

(4) Point out the true reason why any doubt is entertained respecting the genuineness of the books of the New Testament; and show the fallacy of that reason. p. 34.

(5) Show that it could not have been easy to obtain currency and reception to forged Christian writings. p. 35.

(*a*) Describe briefly the only writing in the name of Christ himself that is deserving of any notice. p. 35.

(6) By what reflection may we be convinced that the ascription of the first three Gospels could not have been arbitrary or conjectural? p. 35.

(7) May it not be said that doubts were entertained among many of the early Christians respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures? p. 35.

(*β*) From what considerations does the concurrence in the sacred canon amongst the early Christians derive especial weight? p. 35.

(8) Is not the evidence of the genuineness of our Scriptures comparatively defective? p. 36.

(9) Put down the allegations upon the subject of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures which are capable of being established by proof[a]. pp. 36, 37.

CHAPTER X.

Recapitulate the arguments in proof of the first proposition in the first part of the Evidences. pp. 62—64.

(1) Prove briefly that the first preachers of Christianity acted as they did for a miraculous story; and that this was in fact the narrative contained in our Scripture. pp. 63, 64.

(*a*) Give a brief summary of the several arguments which prove that the strict genuineness of all or any of the Gospels, is perhaps more than is necessary to establish the fact, that the apostles and others acted as they did for the miraculous history recorded in the New Testament. p. 64.

(2) Admitting that the Gospels exhibit the story which the apostles told, and for which they acted and suffered, is this conclusive of the truth of Christianity? p. 64.

[a] *In examinations it is usual to take these allegations for granted, and therefore I have not framed questions upon the eleven sections in which they are established.*

PROPOSITION II.

CHAPTER I.

(1) How does Paley exemplify the extent of his belief in miraculous accounts; and what answer does he make to the charge of credulity with reference to such belief? pp. 65, 66.

State briefly the distinctions which Paley proposes in relation to the proof of miracles. pp. 66—70.

(2) Mention the cases affected by the distinction respecting the relative date of miracles and the writings in which they are recorded. pp. 66, 67.

(3) In what is the value of this distinction shown to have been accurately exemplified? p. 67.

(4) Discriminate between the Christian records and accounts not known in the country to which they relate. p. 67.

(5) Show why transient rumors may be laid out of the case; and that this distinction is altogether on the side of Christianity. p. 67.

(6) Does Christianity rest upon what may be termed a naked history? p. 68.

(7) What are Paley's remarks upon particularity as a ground of distinction? p. 68.

(α) Where alone is particularity to be looked for? p. 68.

(8) Explain what is meant by stories of supernatural events which require nothing more than an *otiose* assent: and show that the accounts of the Gospel miracles were not of this kind. pp. 68, 69.

(β) Would not the promise of a future state be of itself sufficient to induce men to act in the manner in which the first Christians acted? p. 69.

(9) Illustrate the distinction respecting those accounts which come merely in *affirmance* of opinions already formed; and show the value of it with reference to the Gospel history. pp. 69, 70.

(γ) Is not the setting up of a religion by miracles a comparatively frequent occurrence? p. 70.

(10) Show that the apostles would not have propagated a belief of the miracles which they did not themselves entertain.—Or, prove that the conduct of the apostles cannot be accounted for, supposing their story to have been false. p. 70.

State briefly the distinctions that relate to the miracles themselves. pp. 70—74.

(11) Distinguish between the Christian miracles, and those that can be resolved into false perceptions. p. 71.

(δ) What is meant by momentary miracles? p. 71.

(ε) What does Paley mean by miracles of a mixed nature? p. 71.

(ζ) Why is there much more room for imposture in the case of momentary miracles? p. 72.

(η) Why may we entirely omit the discussion of claims to inspiration, secret notices and directions, internal sensations, and consciousness of being acted upon by spiritual influences? p. 72.

(12) Explain what is meant by tentative miracles; and illustrate the value of the distinction respecting them. p. 72.

(13) Mention some cases in which, allowing the phenomenon to be real, the fact to be true, it still remains doubtful whether a *miracle* was wrought. p. 73.

(14) May not the Gospel narratives be regarded as accounts in which the variation of a small circumstance may have transformed some extraordinary appearance or some critical coincidence of events into a miracle? pp. 73, 74.

(15) State and enforce the general remark, which, in reading the Scriptures, it is necessary to bear in mind with regard to the exceptions which may justly be taken to relations of miracles. —Or, answer the objection that there are miracles mentioned in the New Testament which fall within some or other of the exceptions which may justly be taken to miraculous accounts. p. 74.

(16) What final distinction does Paley apply to the cases that remain undisposed of by the exceptions to miraculous accounts? p. 74.

CHAPTER II.

Describe the cases with which Hume has chosen to confront the miracles of the New Testament, and give Paley's observations upon them. pp. 75—77.

(1) Might not the Christian miracles be confronted with better attested miracles than those which Paley has specified? p. 75.

(2) Relate the cure alleged to have been performed by Vespasian, and give the substance of Paley's remarks upon it. p. 75.

(3) What is the story related by Cardinal De Retz, and Paley's solution of the case? p 76.

(4) In what way may we dispose of the miracles related to have been wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris? pp. 76, 77.

(5) Give Paley's concluding remarks upon the instances adduced by Hume.—Or, briefly distinguish the miracles adduced by Hume, and the conduct of men in regard to them, from the Christian miracles, and the conduct of the first teachers of Christianity. p. 77.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

(1) What is the prophecy respecting our Saviour, which is selected by Paley, and when was it written? p. 78.

(2) Give the substance of Paley's observations upon this prophecy. pp. 78, 79.

(α) What evidence is there that the prophetic words which are mentioned by Paley were written before the birth of Christ? p. 78.

(β) Mention the two circumstances which add force to the passage, by rendering its prophetic character the more indisputable. p. 78.

(γ) What are Bishop Lowth's corrections? pp. 78, 79.

(δ) Mention the turn which the Jews give to the prediction; and show that their exposition labors under insuperable difficulties. p. 79.

(3) Why were not the advent of Christ, and the consequences of it, more distinctly revealed in the Old Testament? p. 79, note.

(4) What is the second head of Paley's argument from prophecy? pp. 79, 80.

(5) What is the only question that can be raised upon the subject of Christ's predictions respecting the destruction of Jerusalem; and what are Paley's observations upon it? p. 80.

CHAPTER II.

(1) Mention and explain the two points which Paley is willing to admit in stating the morality of the Gospel. p. 81.

(α) What is the scope of Christianity, as a Revelation, and what is its direct object? p. 81.

(β) What is the foundation of Paley's opinion, that morality cannot be a subject of discovery? p. 81.

(2) Give the general observations upon the morality of the Gospel, which Paley makes previously to the division of his subject. pp. 81, 82.

(3) What is there observable in the morality of the Gospel, as it relates to the malicious passions? pp. 82, 83.

(γ) What are the positions made out by the author of the Internal Evidence of Christianity? p. 82.

(δ) How are these exemplified by him? p. 82.

(ε) What are the two opposite descriptions of character under which mankind may be classed? p. 82.

(ζ) Quote some passages in which the patient character is designed and recommended by Christ. p. 83, note.

(η) How does the Author of the internal evidence of Christianity prove that the patient character possesses most true worth? p. 83.

(θ) Answer the objection, that the heroic character is occasionally useful. p. 83.

(4) What peculiarity is there in the Gospel, in relation to the voluptuous passions? p. 83.

(5) Give our Lord's answer to the Jewish lawyer, and Paley's remarks upon it. p. 84.

(κ) Show that though our Lord's answer was not orignal, it still evinced the greatness of his wisdom. p. 84.

(6) What peculiarity is there in the Gospel, as it relates to the motives to good deeds? pp. 84, 85.

(λ) Give instances which we are taught to exclude all regard to fame and reputation. p. 85.

(μ) In what respect are we to cast off all regard to the good opinion of others? p. 85.

(7) Show that our Lord's style of instruction was precisely adapted to his character and situation. p. 85.

(8) Give Paley's remarks upon our Lord's sermon upon the Mount. p. 86, note.

(9) What is incidental to the mode of instruction which our Lord adopted? p. 86.

(10) Quote some of the precepts in Christ's sermon upon the Mount, and describe their true character. p. 86.

(11) Answer the objection, that the disposition they inculcate is unattainable. p. 86.

(12) Were our Saviour's rules designed to regulate public affairs? p. 86.

(13) Ought not a revelation to contain minute directions for every case that may occur? p. 86, note.

(14) What are Paley's observations upon the Parables and the Lord's Prayer? p. 87.

(15) Mention the eight negative qualities observable in our Lord's discourses. pp. 87—89.

(16) Show that Christianity is alike applicable and useful to all forms of government. p. 89.

(17) Give Paley's summary view of that portion of the subject of the morality of the Gospel, which is most reducible to points of argument. pp. 89—91.

(18) Notice briefly those topics of a more diffuse nature which form the conclusion of this chapter. p. 91.

CHAPTER III.

(1) In what does the candor of the Evangelists consist? p. 92.

(2) Mention some instances in which the Evangelists honestly related what they must have perceived would make against them. pp. 92, 93.

(3) Cite some of the passages which were very unlikely to have presented themselves to the mind of a forger or fabulist; and give Paley's remarks thereon. pp. 93, 94.

(4) Show that the account of the institution of the Eucharist bears strong marks of truth. p. 94.

(5) Quote the remarks of Lardner, Beattie, and Duchal, on the candor of the Evangelists. p. 94.

(6) Show the extreme naturalness of some of the things related in the New Testament. p. 95.

(7) What are the *properties* noticed by Paley? p. 96.

CHAPTER IV.

(1) Why is the matter contained in St. John's Gospel different in general from that of the other Gospels? p. 96.

(2) Give the substance of the seven articles in which Paley shows the identity of Christ's character. pp. 96—100.

(α) On comparing the accounts given by St. John with those of the other Evangelists, what circumstance is there which meets our observation, and why are we entitled to lay any stress upon it? pp. 96, 97.

(β) Illustrate, by examples taken from all the four Gospels, our Saviour's manner of raising reflections from the objects and incidents before him, or turning a particular discourse into an opportunity of general instruction. pp. 97—99.

(γ) What are Paley's concluding remarks on our Saviour's manner in this respect? p. 99.

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(3) State the two correspondencies relating to the Saviour's agony in the garden, and the charge upon which he was condemned. p. 101.

(4) What general instance of agreement is there respecting the Apostles? p. 101.

CHAPTER V.

Show the originality of our Saviour's character. p. 102.

CHAPTER VI.

(1) Explain the value of the accordance of the facts mentioned or referred to in Scripture with foreign and independent accounts. pp. 102, 103.

Write down some examples of this conformity. p. 103, *et seq.*

(2) What are the three considerations which render the conformity the more remarkable? p. 115.

(3) What is the difficulty which has been raised upon Luke ii. 2, and how is it removed? pp. 115, 116.

(4) What difficulty occurs respecting the age of Jesus in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar; and what is the solution thereof? pp. 116, 117.

(5) State the difficulty respecting Theudas, the person to whom Gamaliel is made to refer in the Acts; and give the solution of it. p. 117.

(6) What is the difficulty respecting Zacharias, who was killed between the temple and the altar; and in what way may it be solved? p. 117.

CHAPTER VII.

(1) Explain the nature of the argument from undesigned coincidences. p. 118.

(2) What are the three considerations which point out how the argument *bears* upon the general question of the Christian history? p. 118.

(3) What is the observation on St. John's writings, which Paley makes as a sequel to the argument? p. 119.

CHAPTER VIII.

Write down the argument on the history of the Resurrection. pp. 119, 120.

(1) Wherein does the peculiar value of the Resurrection, as a head of evidence, consist? p. 119.

(2) What are the only two points on the subject of the Resurrection which present themselves to our consideration? p. 119.

(3) May not the Apostles have knowingly published a falsehood? p. 119.

(4) Is there not a possibility that the Apostles were themselves *deceived*? pp. 119, 120.

CHAPTER IX.

Section I.

(1) Give an account of the progress of Christianity within each of the three periods into which the propagation of religion may be divided. pp. 121, 122.

(2) What are the observations which seem material to be made upon the evangelic account of the propagation of Christianity? pp. 122, 123.

(3) How is the evangelic narrative of the progress of our religion supported by parallel testimonies? p. 123.

(4) Give a sketch of the other evidence of the rapid and extensive propagation of Christianity, besides that derived from the New Testament. pp. 123—125.

(α) What is the testimony of Tacitus, and the time to which it refers? p. 123.

(β) What does Tacitus mean, when he speaks of Christianity as *repressa in præsens?* p. 123, note.

(γ) What evidence is furnished by Pliny the younger, and what is the date of it? p. 124.

(δ) State the evidence derived from the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen. pp. 124, 125.

(ε) Show that it is probable that Constantine declared himself on the side of the Christians because they were a powerful party. p. 125.

(5) Mention some circumstances tending to prove that many of the early Christians were men of learning. p. 125.

Section II.

(1) Why is there any thing more remarkable in the progress of Christianity than in that of other systems or opinions? p. 126.

(2) May not the success of Christianity be attributed to the force of education, or the influence of authority or fashion? p. 126.

(3) State the comparison drawn by Paley between the early progress of Christianity, and the success of modern missions; and give the conclusion at which he arrives. pp. 126—128.

Section III.

(1) What is the only event which in any way admits of comparison with the propagation of our religion? and in what articles does that event confessedly resemble Christianity? p. 128.

(2) Did Mahomet found his pretensions upon miracles properly so called? p. 128.

(3) Show that the difference between Christianity and Mahometanism, with respect to miracles, of itself constitutes a bar to all reasoning from the one case to the other. p. 129.

(4) What answer is to be returned to the objection, If one religion could make its way without miracles, why might not another? p. 129.

(5) What was the success of Mahomet, when he confined himself to persuasion? p. 130.

(6) Show that the establishment of Mahomet's religion was effected by causes which in no degree appertained to the origin of Christianity. pp. 130—132.

(α) What was Mahomet's origin and condition in life? p. 130.

(β) In what way did he conduct his design in the outset? p. 130.

(γ) What was the fundamental doctrine he delivered? p. 130.

(δ) Show that two purposes of artful policy pervade the whole of the Koran. p. 131.

(7) Give an account of Mahomet and his enterprise, after the twelve or thirteen years of his peaceable preaching. p. 132.

(8) Account for these circumstances—that Mahomet should collect an army; that his army should conquer; and that his religion should proceed together with his conquests. p. 133.

(9) How does Paley, in concluding his consideration of Mahometanism, briefly show that its progress in no way affects the Christian argument? p. 133.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

(1) Show the unreasonableness of rejecting the substance of a story on account of some diversity in the circumstances with which it is related. p. 134.

(2) Explain the cause of a great deal of the discrepancy observable in the Gospels; and show that it is a very uncertain ground of objection. pp. 134, 135.

(3) Show that it was probable that discrepancies would be particularly numerous in the Gospels. p. 135.

(4) Explain the particular design of St. Matthew in writing *the history of* the Resurrection, and clear up the apparent discrepancy arising therefrom. p. 135.

CHAPTER II.

(1) State and answer the objection concerning the interpretation given by the apostles to passages of the Old Testament. pp. 135, 136.

(2) What are Paley's remarks on the alleged error of the first Christians in expecting the day of judgment? p. 136.

(3) What is the difficulty which attends the subject of the erroneous opinions imputed to the apostles; and how may it be removed? p. 137.

CHAPTER III.

How far is Christianity answerable for the truth of the Jewish history? pp. 137, 138.

CHAPTER IV.

(1) Explain the real meaning of what is termed the rejection of the Christian history. p. 138.

Write down the substance of Paley's remarks upon the rejection of Christianity by the Jews. pp. 138, 139.

(2) Show what was the state of thought in the mind of a Jew of our Saviour's time. pp. 138, 139.

(3) What are the two opinions which subsisted amongst the Jews of our Saviour's time; and how do they conjointly afford an explanation of their conduct? p. 139.

(4) Why did the Jews rely so much upon the tradition of miracles in their own history, while they rejected those which they themselves had witnessed? p. 139.

Give the substance of Paley's remarks upon the rejection of Christianity by the Gentiles. pp. 140—143.

(5) State the principle into which the infidelity of the Gentile world is resolvable; and show that it is not surprising that Christianity was rejected without inquiry. p. 140.

(6) Show that the connexion of Christianity with Judaism was a stumbling block to the learned heathen. p. 140.

(7) Would not the very appearance of the Christian preachers add strength to the objections of the learned heathen? p. 141.

(8) What is the name and character which Tacitus gives to Christianity; and what are Paley's particular remarks and general observations thereon? pp. 141, 142.

(9) How may we account for the silence of the heathens of rank and learning? p. 142.

(10) Into what two classes would the heathen public and the heathen writers be respectively divided? p. 142.

(11) How did the heathen adversaries of Christianity attempt to explain away the Christian miracles? p. 143.

CHAPTER V.

Answer the objection, that the Christian miracles are not recited or appealed to by early Christian writers so fully or so frequently as might have been expected. pp. 143—145.

(1) Does not the unfrequency of allusions to the Christian miracles, in the apostolic epistles, furnish just ground of objection? p. 143.

(2) What is the reason of the absence of any direct recital of the Christian history in the writings of the apostolic fathers in general? p. 144.

(3) What observation does Paley make upon the sparingness with which the ancient Christian advocates appealed to miracles? p. 144.

CHAPTER VI.

(1) What, in the opinion of the adversaries of Christianity, would be the kind of proof of a revelation which really came from God? p. 145.

(2) What is the proper question respecting the nature of the Christian Evidences? p. 145.

(3) How may we vindicate Christianity by analogical reasoning? p. 145.

(α) Ought we to expect, in a revelation, what, according to our ideas, would be a system of optimism? p. 145.

(β) Will the objector gain any thing by comparing Christianity with the state and progress of natural religion, or with any of the common causes by which human life is improved? p. 146.

(4) What would be the probable consequences of that overpowering evidence which the adversaries of Christianity require? pp. 146, 147.

(γ) What would be the influence of irresistible proof in a religious point of view? p. 147.

(δ) Would not irresistible proof be productive of great evil in a civil point of view? p. 147.

CHAPTER VII.

(1) What is the paradox respecting the Christian religion for which many have been found to contend? p. 148.

(2) What are the two sources of mistake in the conclusions of those who contend that Christianity has been productive of evil rather than good? p. 148.

Give Paley's remarks on the beneficial influence of Christianity. *pp. 148—150.*

(3) Are the representations of history a fair guide in estimating the beneficial tendency of religion? p. 148.

(4) In what manner does Christianity act upon public usages and institutions? p. 148.

(5) Show that the influence of Christianity even upon public usages and institutions has been important. p. 149.

(6) Does not Christianity raise the standard of morality? p. 149.

(7) In estimating the effects of Christianity, is it right to view it solely as a revelation? p. 150.

Show that Christianity is charged with many consequences for which it is not responsible? pp. 150, 151.

(8) May it not be said, that Christianity has been the cause of persecution? p. 150.

(9) Answer the objection, that Christianity is chargeable with every mischief of which it has been the occasion. p. 150.

(10) What are the considerations to be borne in mind with respect to differences of opinion? p. 151.

CHAPTER VIII.

(1) What are Paley's observations respecting the order of study in religion? pp.151, 152.

(2) What are his concluding remarks respecting the conduct of the Deity, as displayed in the origin and progress of Christianity; the doctrine of a future state; and the immateriality and immortality of the soul? pp. 152—154.

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